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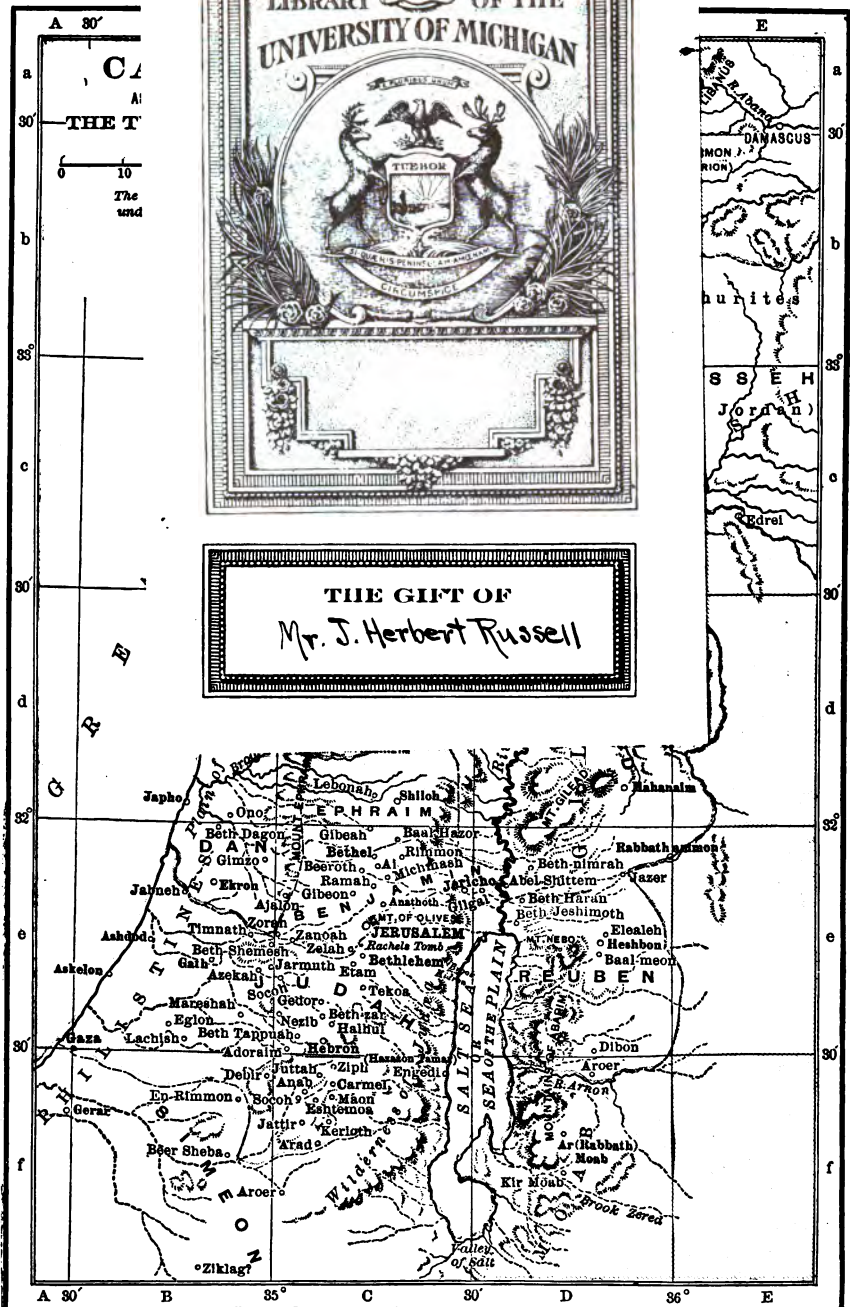
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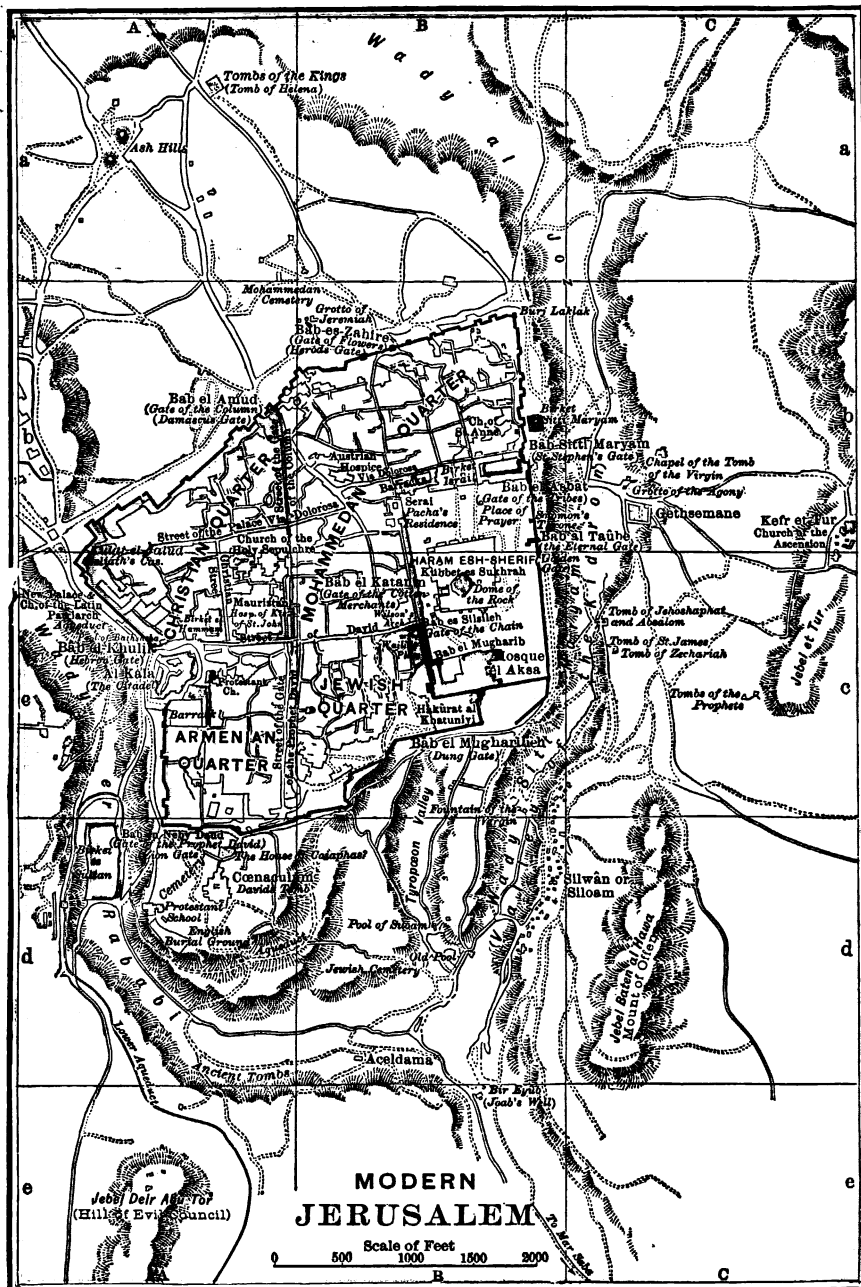
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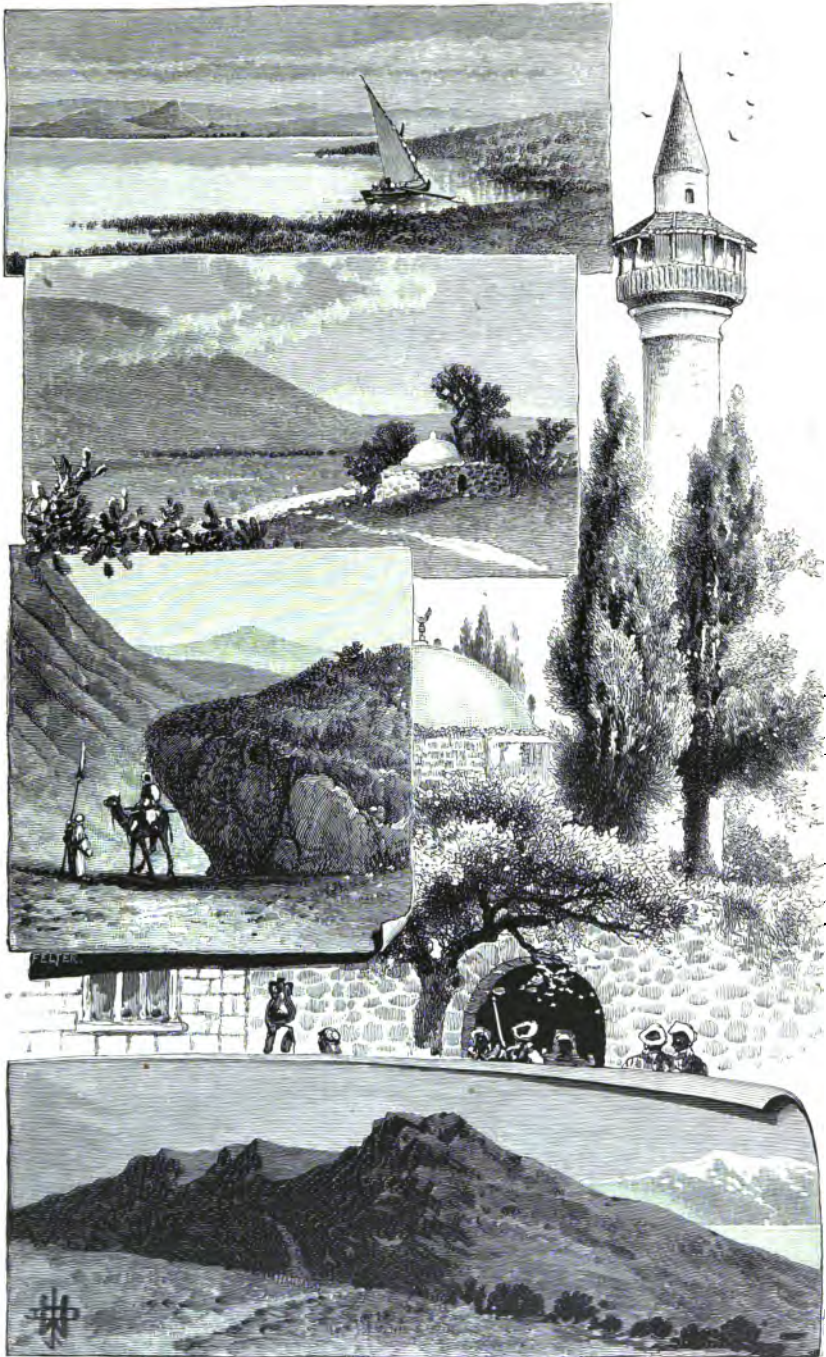


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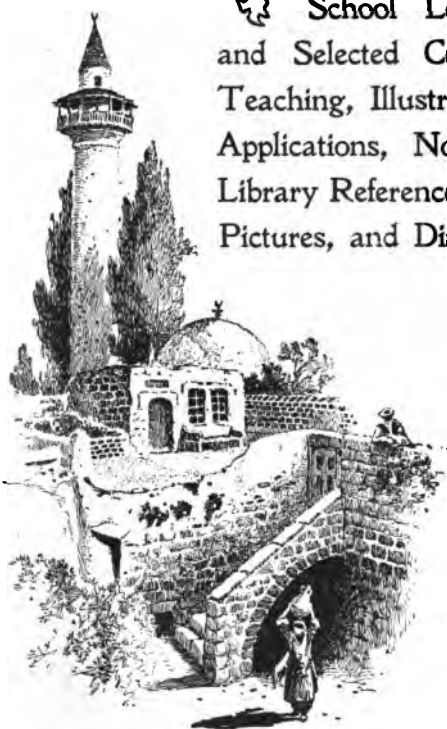
1. CAPERNAUM. 2. NAIN. 3. ROAD FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO—"THE BLOODY WAY." 4. A CORNER IN NAZARETH.
5. HORN OF HATTIN, WHERE OUR LORD IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE UTTERED THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES

1896

A Guide

 To the Study of the Sunday
School Lessons, with Original
and Selected Comments, Methods of
Teaching, Illustrative Stories, Practical
Applications, Notes on Eastern Life,
Library References, Maps, Tables, 
Pictures, and Diagrams ∴ ∴



JESSE LYMAN HURLBUT
ROBERT REMINGTON DOHERTY

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LESSONS AND GOLDEN TEXTS FOR 1896.

Studies in the Gospel According to Luke.

NOTE.—The titles of these lessons have been chosen in view of the connected passages mentioned, and in the expectation that the entire selections named will be used in preparing the lessons.

First Quarter.

Lesson 1. Jan. 5.—THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST. Luke 1. 5-17. *Commit vs. 15, 16.* (Study connection in Luke 1. 1-80.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways. Luke 1. 76.

2. Jan. 12.—THE BOY JESUS. Luke 2. 40-52. *Commit vs. 51, 52.* (Study whole chap. Luke 2. 1-52.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Luke 2. 52.

3. Jan. 19.—THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. Luke 3. 1-15. *Commit vs. 21, 22.* (Read Luke 3. 1-33. Compare also Malachi, chap. 3.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1. 29.

4. Jan. 26.—THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS. Luke 4. 14-22. *Commit vs. 18, 19.* (Study whole chap., Luke 4. 1-44. Read also Isa. 61. 1-3.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** His word was with power. Luke 4. 32.

5. Feb. 2.—THE POWER OF JESUS. Luke 5. 17-26. *Commit vs. 23-24.* (Read Luke 5. 1-26, and 6. 1-11.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins. Luke 5. 24.

6. Feb. 9.—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. Luke 6. 41-49. *Commit vs. 47-49.* (Read Luke 6. 12-49.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Luke 6. 46.

7. Feb. 16.—THE GREAT HELPER. Luke 7. 9-16. *Commit vs. 14-16.* (Read Luke 7. 1-50.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** They glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us. Luke 7. 16.

8. Feb. 23.—FAITH ENCOURAGED. Luke 8. 41, 42, 49-55. *Commit vs. 48-50.* (Read Luke 8. 1-56.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Fear not: believe only. Luke 8. 50.

9. March 1.—JESUS THE MESSIAH. Luke 9. 18-27. *Commit vs. 23-24.* (Read Luke 9. 1-50.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** This is my beloved Son: hear ye him. Luke 9. 35.

10. March 8.—TRUE LOVE TO ONE'S NEIGHBOR. Luke 10. 25-37. *Commit vs. 25-27.* (Read Luke 9. 51-62, and 10. 1-42.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. Luke 10. 27.

11. March 15.—TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER. Luke 11. 1-13. *Commit vs. 9, 10.* (Read Luke 11. 1-54.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Luke 11. 9.

12. March 22.—FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SERVANTS. (May be used as a temperance lesson.) Luke 12. 37-48. *Commit vs. 37, 38.* (Read the chap., Luke 12. 1-59.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. Eph. 5. 18.

13. March 29.—REVIEW. **GOLDEN TEXT:** Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. Luke 12. 8.

Second Quarter.

Lesson 1. April 5.—THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. (Easter lesson.) Luke 24. 1-12. *Commit vs. 6-8.* **GOLDEN TEXT:** He is not here, but is risen. Luke 24. 6.

2. April 12.—PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER. Luke 14.

15-24. *Commit vs. 21-23.* (Read chap., Luke 14. 1-35.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Come; for all things are now ready. Luke 14. 17.

3. April 19.—THE LOST FOUND. (May be used as a temperance lesson.) Luke 15. 11-24. *Commit vs. 18-20.* (Read Luke 15. 1-32.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Luke 15. 10.

4. April 26.—THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS. Luke 16. 19-31. *Commit vs. 25, 26.* (Read the chap., Luke 16. 1-31.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Luke 16. 13.

5. May 3.—FAITH. Luke 17. 5-19. *Commit vs. 17-19.* (Read Luke 17. 1-37.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Increase our faith, Luke 17. 5.

6. May 10.—LESSONS ON PRAYER. Luke 18. 9-17. *Commit vs. 15-17.* (Study the whole chap., Luke 18. 1-43.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. Luke 18. 13.

7. May 17.—PARABLE OF THE POUNDS. Luke 19. 11-27. *Commit vs. 13-15.* **GOLDEN TEXT:** He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. Luke 16. 10.

8. May 24.—JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE. Luke 20. 9-19. *Commit vs. 13-16.* (Read the connection, Luke 19. 47 to Luke 21. 4.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Luke 20. 17.

9. May 31.—DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM FORETOLD. Luke 21. 20-36. *Commit vs. 24-26.* (Read chap. 21. 5-38.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. Luke 21. 33.

10. June 7.—WARNING TO THE DISCIPLES. Luke 22. 24-37. *Commit vs. 24-26.* (Carefully read Luke 22. 1-46.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Phil. 2. 5.

11. June 14.—JESUS CRUCIFIED. Luke 23. 33-44. *Commit vs. 44-46.* (Read from Luke 22. 66 to 23. 54.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. 1 Cor. 15. 3.

12. June 21.—THE RISEN LORD. Luke 24. 36-43. *Commit vs. 45-48.* (Read the whole chap., Luke 24. 1-53.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The Lord is risen indeed. Luke 24. 34.

13. June 28.—REVIEW. **GOLDEN TEXT:** Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations. Luke 24. 47.

Studies in Old Testament History.

Third Quarter.

Lesson 1. July 5.—DAVID, KING OF JUDAH. 2 Sam. 2. 1-11. *Commit vs. 5-7.* (Read chaps. 1 and 2.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice. Psalm 97. 1.

2. July 12.—DAVID, KING OVER ALL ISRAEL. 2 Sam. 5. 1-12. *Commit vs. 10-12.* (Read chap. 3. 1 to chap. 5. 25.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. 2 Sam. 5. 10.

3. July 19.—THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM. 2 Sam. 6. 1-12. *Commit vs. 11, 12.* (Read 2 Sam. 6. 1-23. Compare Psalm 24.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee. Psalm 34. 12.

4. July 26.—GOD'S PROMISES TO DAVID. 2 Sam. 7. 4-16. *Commit vs. 13, 15.* (Read the whole of chap. 7.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust. Psalm 71. 1.

5. Aug. 2.—DAVID'S KINDNESS. 2 Sam. 9. 1-13. *Commit v. 7.* **GOLDEN TEXT:** Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. Rom. 12. 10.

6. Aug. 9.—DAVID'S VICTORIES. 2 Sam. 10. 8-19. *Commit vs. 11, 12.* (Read chaps. 8 and 10.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The

LESSONS AND GOLDEN TEXTS.

Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Psalm 27. 1.

7. Aug. 16.—**DAVID'S CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS.** Psalm 32. 1-11. *Commit vs. 1-5.* (Read also Psalm 51.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Psalm 51. 10.

8. Aug. 23.—**ABSAALOM'S REBELLION.** 2 Sam. 15. 1-12. *Commit vs. 4-6.* (Read chaps. 15 and 16.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Exod. 20. 12.

9. Aug. 30.—**ABSAALOM'S DEATH.** 2 Sam. 18. 24-33. *Commit vs. 32, 33.* (Read chaps. 17 and 18.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. Psalm 1. 6.

10. Sept. 6.—**DAVID'S LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE.** 1 Chron. 22. 6-16. *Commit vs. 11-13.* (Compare Psalm 84.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Psalm 84. 4.

11. Sept. 13.—**DAVID'S GRATITUDE TO GOD.** 2 Sam. 22. 40-51. *Commit vs. 47-50.* (Read chap. 22 and chap. 23. 1-23.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. 2 Sam. 22. 2.

12. Sept. 20.—**DESTRUCTIVE VICES.** (May be used as a temperance lesson.) Prov. 18. 22-33. *Commit vs. 25-27.* (Read the chap.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death. Prov. 16. 25.

13. Sept. 27.—**REVIEW.** **GOLDEN TEXT:** The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. Prov. 18. 10.

Fourth Quarter.

Lesson 1. Oct. 4.—**SOLOMON ANOINTED KING.** 1 Kings 1. 22-39. *Commit vs. 22-30.* (Read chap. 1.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Fear the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways. 1 Kings 2. 3.

2. Oct. 11.—**SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE.** 1 Kings 3. 5-15. *Commit vs. 11, 12.* (Read chap. 3.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Psalm 111. 10.

3. Oct. 18.—**SOLOMON'S WEALTH AND WISDOM.** 1 Kings

4. 25-34. *Commit vs. 29, 30.* (Read the whole chap.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Sam. 2. 30.

4. Oct. 25.—**THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.** Prov. 1. 1-19. *Commit vs. 7-10.* (Read Prov. 1. 1-33.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Prov. 1. 10.

5. Nov. 1.—**BUILDING THE TEMPLE.** 1 Kings 5. 1-12. *Commit vs. 4, 5.* (Read chaps. 5 and 6.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Psalm 127. 1.

6. Nov. 8.—**THE TEMPLE DEDICATED.** 1 Kings 8. 54-63. *Commit vs. 62, 63.* (Read 1 Kings 8. 1-66.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. Hab. 2. 20.

7. Nov. 15.—**GOD'S BLESSING UPON SOLOMON.** 1 Kings 9. 1-9. *Commit vs. 4, 5.* (Read the whole chap.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. Prov. 10. 22.

8. Nov. 22.—**REWARDS OF OBEDIENCE.** Prov. 3. 1-17. *Commit vs. 1-4.* (Read Prov. 3. 1-35.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Prov. 3. 6.

9. Nov. 29.—**THE FAME OF SOLOMON.** 1 Kings 10. 1-10. *Commit vs. 6-8.* (Read chap. 10. 1-29.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Behold, a greater than Solomon is here. Matt. 12. 42.

10. Dec. 6.—**SOLOMON'S SIN.** 1 Kings 11. 4-13. *Commit vs. 9, 10.* (Read 1 Kings 11. 1-43.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. 10. 12.

11. Dec. 13.—**CAUTIONS AGAINST INTEMPERANCE.** (The Quarterly Temperance Lesson.) Prov. 23. 15-25. *Commit vs. 19-21.* (Read Prov. 23. 1-35.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty. Prov. 23. 21.

12. Dec. 20.—**THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.** Matt. 2. 1-12. *Commit vs. 10, 11.* **GOLDEN TEXT:** And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Luke 2. 10.

13. Dec. 27.—**REVIEW.** **GOLDEN TEXT:** Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. Eccles. 12. 13.

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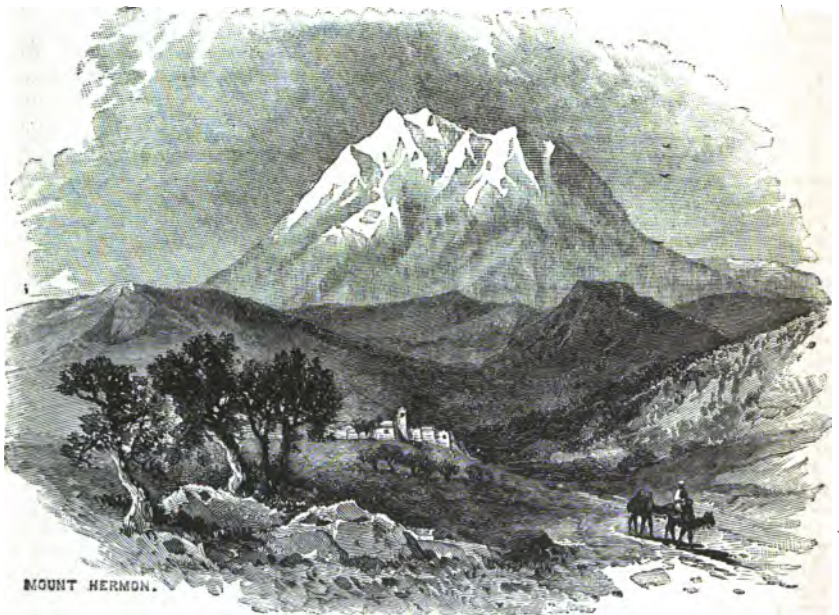
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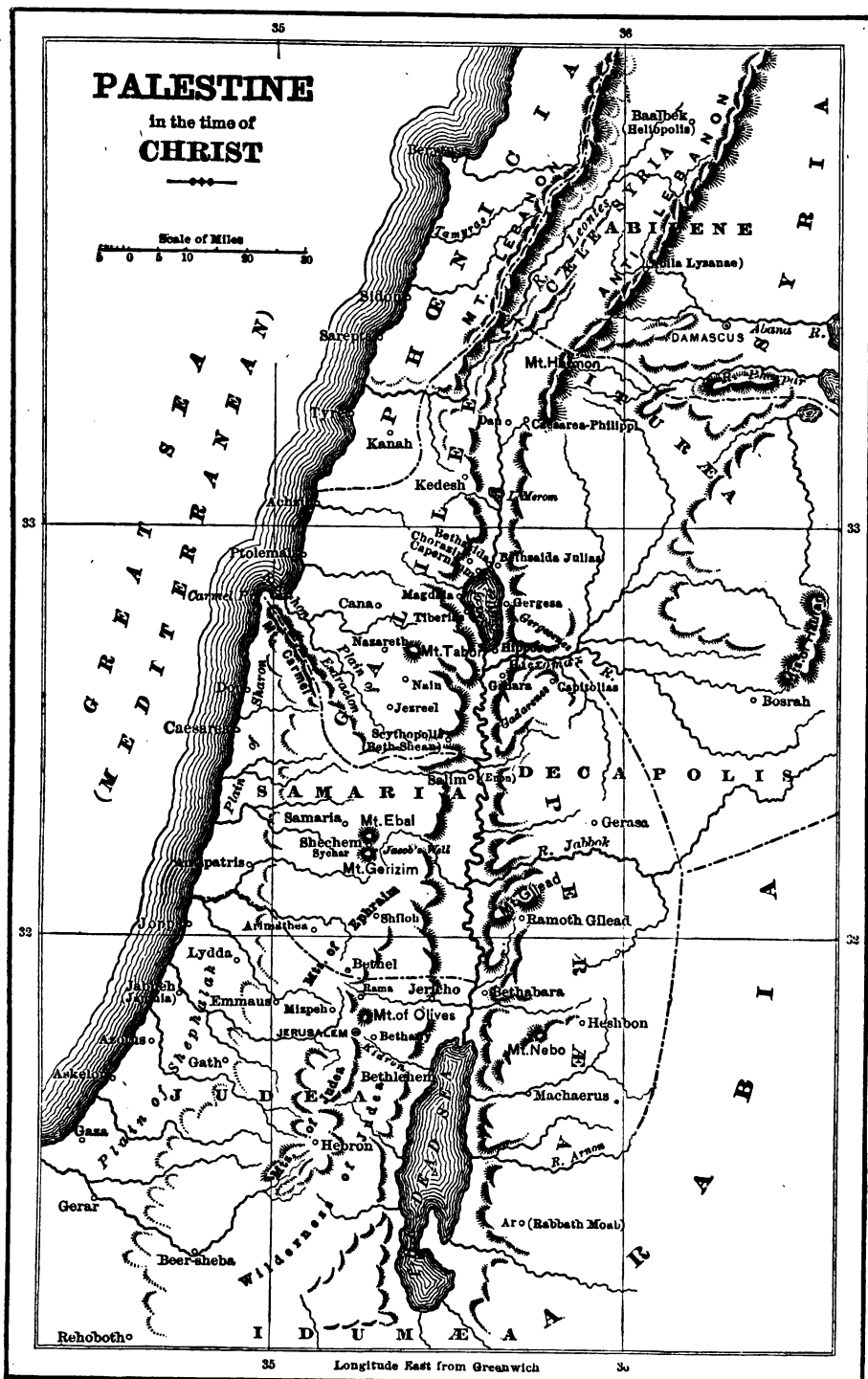
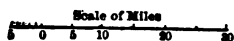
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in the time of
CHRIST



FIRST QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

- I. SILENCE.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. [Psalm 34. 1-7.]
 - SUPT. I will bless the LORD at all times : his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
 - SCHOOL. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD : the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.
 - SUPT. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.
 - SCHOOL. I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.
 - SUPT. They looked unto him, and were lightened : and their faces were not ashamed.
 - SCHOOL. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.
 - SUPT. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them.
- III. SINGING.
- IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.
- V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.
- VI. SCRIPTURE LESSON.
- VII. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE.

- I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
- II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
- III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, AND OUTLINE by the school in concert.
- IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.]
- VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings].

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. [Psalm 57. 9-11.]
 - SUPT. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people : I will sing unto thee among the nations.
 - SCHOOL. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.
 - SUPT. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens :
 - SCHOOL. Let thy glory be above all the earth.
- III. DISMISSION.

SECOND QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

- I. SILENCE.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. [Gal. 6. 7-10.]
 - SUPT. Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
 - SCHOOL. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ;
 - SUPT. But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
 - SCHOOL. And let us not be weary in well doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
 - SUPT. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.
- III. SINGING.
- IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.
- V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.
- VI. SCRIPTURE LESSON.
- VII. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE.

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- VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings].

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
 - SUPT. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God, and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.
 - SCHOOL. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.
- III. DISMISSION.

ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER, 1896.

LESSON I.—JANUARY 5.

THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST.—LUKE 1. 5-17.

[Study connection in Luke 1. 1-80.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.—
Luke 1. 78.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Some time during the week October 3-9, B. C. 6. (See note on verses 8, 9.) About nineteen hundred years ago; about four hundred years after Malachi, the "last of the prophets," had promised in mystical language that Elijah should appear to usher in the Messiah. John was that second Elijah. (See note on verse 17.)

PLACE.—The Temple, in Jerusalem. Herod's workmen were still busy with its transformation, and their scaffolding was all about Zacharias as he walked that afternoon through its courts "in the order of his course." The home of Zacharias, the birthplace of John, was in a city of Judea in "the hill country," that is, in "a little hill town on one of the rounded gray brows of limestone which in monotonous succession form the landscape of the Negeb." (*Geikie*.) *Reland's* conjecture that it was the same as the Juttah of Josh. 18. 55 (the modern *Yutta*) is a mere guess. According to an old tradition it was Hebron, one of thirteen towns assigned to the priests.

JERUSALEM was at this time a great and beautiful city. *Ederheim* calls attention to its underground population. *Milman* has estimated its population at more than 2,500,000. But all estimates are precarious.

INTRODUCTORY TO THE LIFE OF JESUS the apostle John gives a PROLOGUE on the incarnation of the Word of God (John 1. 1-16). Luke has a formal DEDICATION to the "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1. 1-4). Matthew and Luke each present the GENEALOGIES of Jesus (Matt. 1. 1-17; Luke 3. 23-38). Mark plunges "straightway" into his story.

ORDER OF EVENTS.—This is the very first fact recorded in the Gospel history. The circumstances of our Lord's birth were "on this wise:" 1. Gabriel foretells John's birth to Zacharias (Luke 1. 5-23). 2. Gabriel foretells John's birth to Mary in Nazareth (Luke 1. 26-38). 3. Mary visits Elisabeth, and sings the Magnificat (Luke 1. 39-56). 4. Zacharias's miraculous dumbness is miraculously cured (Luke 1. 57-79). 5. An angel declares to Joseph the divine parentage of Jesus (Matt. 1. 18-25). 6. Angels announce the birth of the Messiah to the keepers of the temple flocks near Bethlehem (Luke 2. 1-20). 7. Simeon and Anna publicly recognize the babe Jesus as the Messiah (Luke 2. 21-39). 8. Wise men see his star

in the East, and come to worship him (Matt. 2. 1-12). 9. Joseph flees to Egypt with Mary and Jesus (Matt. 2. 13-15). 10. Herod murders the infants of Bethlehem (Matt. 2. 16-18). 11. Joseph moves to Nazareth (Matt. 2. 19-23).

LESSON HYMN.—

Hark, the glad sound! the Saviour comes, The Saviour promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne, And every voice a song.
He comes, the broken heart to bind, The wounded soul to cure,
And, with the treasures of his grace, To enrich the humble poor.
Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace, Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heaven's eternal arches ring With thy beloved name.—*Philip Doddridge.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (December 30), The Forerunner of Christ, Luke 1. 5-17. *Tuesday*, A wondrous infancy, Luke 1. 59-66. *Wednesday*, Prophecy of greatness, Luke 1. 67-80. *Thursday*, Service of the altar, Exod. 30. 1-10. *Friday*, The Lord's Messenger, Mal. 3. 1-6. *Saturday*, Promise of Elijah, Mal. 4. *Sunday*, Christ's testimony to John, Matt. 11. 7-14.

Authorised Version.

5 There was ¹ in the days of Her'od, the king of Ju-de'a, a certain priest named Zach-

Revised Version.

5 There was in the days of Her'od, king of Ju-dæ'a, a certain priest named Zach-a-

¹ Matt. 2. 1.

I. THE HOME. VERSES 5-7.

5. The days of Herod were pivotal days—an age in which the world was slowly swinging as on a hinge. 1. The world was intellectually active to a remarkable degree. Ovid the poet, Livy the historian, Seneca the sage, were alive and their works were highly esteemed; Vergil and Horace had recently died. 2. The Roman empire, recently established, reached from Spain to the borders of Persia. Carthage, Egypt, the Greek republics, "Asia," besides younger nationalities in Spain, Gaul, and Germany, had been absorbed and reduced to tributary provinces. Augustus Caesar, the first Roman emperor, ruled, it is conjectured, 120,000,000 subjects, with an army of 400,000 men. His strong, far-reaching government established universal peace and made travel possible to the ends of the earth. So when, a generation later, the apostles went forth, each had the Roman roads for highways and the Roman armies for guard. 3. It was a time when a splendid civilization was spread like a crust over a heterogeneous, turbulent, weary world. The heart had been eaten out of the pagan religions, and there was unparalleled corruption in public and private morals; but many loathed the vices they hugged, and, with more or less consciousness, longed for a new faith. 4. Herod himself, in Palestine, reigned over 6,000,000 people. They too were unrestful, and loose in their morals. Bad Jews were bold, and "righteous" Jews too often made broad their phylacteries, prayed at street corners, and despised the poor and the sinful. They were a nation of formalists; but with all their faults they were the repositories of the purest theology, and perhaps the best practical ethics, the world had yet seen. By their very narrowness they kept alive the germs of truth which the Messiah was to develop, the "law" which he was to fulfill. 5. The Jews of the Dispersion in remote lands preserved their ancestral faith, and so formed a ready publishing agency for the Gospel. They learned to speak Greek, which was a nearly universal language, so that when the "good news" came from heaven it was easily made understandable by all. Greek culture and Greek thought blended with Jewish, and the Hebraic Greek which had been created by the translation of the Scriptures (Septuagint, about B. C. 275) supplied an ideal dialect for the clear and forcible exposition of religious truth. From these five considerations it will be seen that "the days of Herod the king" were, beyond all other days, the time when the world was ready for its Saviour—the "fullness of time," in which God sent forth his Son. **Herod, the king**—There are several Herods mentioned in the Bible, and it is needful to clearly distin-

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
a-ri'as, ² of the course of A-bi'a: and his wife was of the daughters of Aa'r'on, and her name was E-lis'a-beth.	ri'as, of the course of A-bi'jah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aa'r'on, and

² 1 Chron. 24. 10, 19: Neh. 12. 4, 17.

guish between them. This one was "Herod the Great," *father* of the Herod (Herod Antipas) before whom Salome danced, who slew John the Baptist, desired to see a miracle worked by Jesus, and whom our Lord described as a fox; of the Herod (Herod Philip I) whose wicked wife Herodias deserted him to become his brother Antipas's queen; and of the Herod (Herod Philip II) who built Cæsarea Philippi, and is mentioned by Luke as Philip the tetrarch. These three were half-brothers. Herod the Great was *grandfather* of the Herod (Herod Agrippa I) who put to death James the elder, cast Peter into prison, and, being hailed by his flatterers as a god, was smitten by an angel of the Lord "because he gave not God the glory;" and *great-grandfather* of that Herod (Herod Agrippa II) who trembled when Paul preached. The Herod of our lesson was not a Jew at all; he was the son of Antipater (pronounced An-tip'-a-ter), a brave Idumean general who had won supreme power in his native land. As Idumea (that is, Edom) lies close to Judea, Antipater soon secured authority over the Jews. This authority Herod inherited. He was as masterful as his father, and even more unscrupulous. At an early age he governed Galilee with credit, and later he became not only king of Judea, but Samaria also, Galilee, and the most important parts of Perea were under his sway. But his throne was no bed of roses. He had to fight hard to retain the successive governments with which he was intrusted in his early manhood; years afterward he was driven by force from his tetrarchy; when made king, with Jerusalem for his capital, he mastered it with difficulty; and all through his reign he was kept apprehensive by intrigue, turbulence, and outright rebellion. His lurid annals may be read at length in the pages of *Josephus*. Beginning his public life a courageous, vigorous, and resourceful young soldier, he ended it a monster of cruelty, of whom it was said, "Better be Herod's swine than his son." His suspicions turned almost everyone into a plotter. His massacre of the infants at Bethlehem was a small thing by the side of other horrors. The whole body of the people groaned under his tyrannous cruelty. Meanwhile such politic acts as the restoration of the temple helped to gloze over Israel's utter woe. Herod the Great died early in B. C. 4, so that the events of our lesson came near the end of his life. *Zacharias* means *Jehovah-remembers*. When a Hebrew babe was to be named it was not uncommon to make a name by pressing two or three words into one. Such names were intended to be descriptive of the child, and where they failed of this they were often in later life supplemented by more characteristic nicknames. The Puritans of England revived this custom of compounding words into names, as in the instance of Praise-God Barebones, a public character of Cromwell's time. **The course of Abia**—Twenty thousand priests lived in Jerusalem and its suburbs—so many that they could not all find constant service in the temple. King David had, centuries before, arranged them in "courses," whose order was determined by lot. Each "course," or division, served for one week in the temple, beginning with Sabbath morning. The course of Abia was the eighth in order. Read 1 Chron. 24. "These courses," says *Alford*, "kept their names and order, though not their descent, after the captivity." "At the head of each was one of the *chief priests* so often mentioned in the New Testament" (*Abbott*), though that phrase has sometimes a looser meaning. **His wife**—The ancient Jews did not teach, as Roman Catholics do, that ministers should not marry. **Daughters of Aaron**—Priests often married outside of their tribe, but John was of priestly descent by both parents. This gave him a highly esteemed "rank" in society. **Elisabeth** means *God-is-my-oath*. The wife of Aaron had had the same name. Zacharias and Elisabeth might easily assure themselves of their priestly descent, because public registries of lineage had been carefully kept since the days of Ezra (Ezra 8. 1, etc.; Neh. 7. 63, etc.).

Authorized Version.

6 And they were both ³righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that E-lis'a-beth was barren; and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that, while he executed the priest's office before God ⁴in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's

Revised Version.

6 her name was E-lis'a-beth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the

7 Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that E-lis'a-beth was barren, and they both were *now* ¹well stricken in years.

8 Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order

9 of his course, according to the custom of

³ Gen. 7, 1; 17, 1; 1 Kings 9, 4; 2 Kings 20, 2; Job 1, 1; Acts 23, 1; 24, 16; Phil. 3, 6. — ⁴ 1 Chron. 24, 19; 2 Chron. 8, 14; 31, 2.

¹ Gr. *advanced in their days*.

6. Both righteous before God—1. Righteous *as individuals*. 2. Righteous *as a family*. 3. Righteous *before God*. They were scrupulous in obeying the details of the Mosaic law, from the holiest of motives. Theirs was, as *Dr. Eidersheim* expresses it, a Pharisaic piety, but in the good sense. "‘Righteous’ Hebrews ate and labored, worshiped and traveled, studied, slept and woke, all by rule, the slightest deviation from which was regarded as sin."—*Ross C. Houghton*. **Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless**—"Note, 1. *Where they walked*; 2. *How they walked*."—*Sunday School Times*. It is said that there were 613 "commandments and ordinances," of which 248 were positive and 365 negative. Zacharias and his wife were evidently as spiritual as they were ritualistic. Their hearts were set on God. Note, that to walk in all the commandments of the Lord will surely lead to higher blessings.

GOOD MEN IN BAD TIMES. "Here we have, 1. A good man living under a bad government; 2. A good man retaining his rectitude amid corrupting influences; 3. A good priest among a degenerate priesthood; 4. A good man finding favor with God in a good wife; 5. A good man and wife serving God carefully, from day to day, in the evening of life."—*Biblical Museum*.

Illustration 1. One might suppose by a first glance at "the days of Herod the king" that there were no quiet, humble, godly people in the world at all. But Luke comes forward to show us Simeon and Anna, Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elisabeth. So in mountain districts you sometimes ascend a steep and rugged pass, where the towering rocks on each side get wilder at each step; vegetation seems left behind, and you fancy the regions of perpetual snow must be near, when suddenly through the dark and narrow defile you step out into the bright smiling valley, with the meandering stream and pleasant meadows, lying in the lap of the icy mountains.

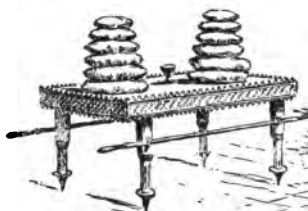
7. They had no child—"1. To cheer their home; 2. To share their love; 3. To follow their example; 4. To serve their God."—*Sunday School Times*. So the Messiah could never be born in *that* family. But even apart from this Messianic hope here was one of the mysteries of Providence: that this godly couple were without children, while the brutal and profane Herod (verse 5) had many who kept alive his vices and his tyranny long after he was gone. **Well stricken** is a pathetic old English idiom. A literal rendering would be "far advanced in days."

II. THE VISION. VERSES 8-12.

8, 9. With more familiar idioms this sentence might be read: "It so happened that while he served as priest in the temple, during the official term of his family (according to the custom then in vogue of having the priestly families serve successively by turn), he was chosen to offer incense in the holy place." **While he executed the priest's office before God**—Notice, 1. Priestly work; 2. Holy fidelity; 3. Divine supervision. **In the order of his course**—"We know what course was in waiting when Jerusalem fell. Reckoning back from this we find that the course of Abia went out of office October 9, B. C. 6. (The student should bear constantly in mind that our era for the birth of Christ was only fixed by the Abbot Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century, and, though he figured as accurately as anyone could in that dark

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
office, his lot was ⁵ to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.	the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the ² temple of the Lord and burn incense.
⁵ Exod. 30. 7, 8; 1 Sam. 2. 28; 1 Chron. 23. 13; 2 Chron. 29. 11.	² Or, sanctuary.

age, it is probably four years wrong.)"—*Farrar*. His lot—Zacharias had that day with intense interest watched the casting of three lots. Before daylight the first lot had decided that some one else should cleanse the great altar and prepare its fires; some hours later the second lot had decided that another priest should offer the sacrifice and cleanse the candlestick and the altar of incense; and now with beating heart he hears that the third lot has selected him to burn the



incense! This was regarded as the most honorable serv-

ice a priest could perform, and no one was allowed to perform it twice. **To burn incense**

—It had four ingredients (Exod. 30. 34), which in burning emitted a smoke whose rising produced an agreeable perfume. It was a symbol of prayer (read Rev. 5. 8); see note on Prayer and Incense on page 18. It was burned twice each day in the temple—at nine and three, the hours of sacrifice; for the Hebrew was taught that prayer needed sacrifice to make it availing. This was probably the afternoon service. We can hardly conceive the feelings of Zacharias when his name was called. The holy privilege he had longed for all his life was at last his. Robed in white, and barefooted, he slowly passed through the splendid courts of the temple. The magnificence of its colonnades and gates was already famous through all the world, though, as we have noted, it was not completed. Other priests were arranged in the court, each silently performing his ritualistic duty. As Zacharias passed the great altar of burnt offering he took from it burning coals and incense, which two attendants carried for him in golden vessels. A sweet-toned bell pealed forth as he opened the great double door, covered with golden plates, and entered the holy place. It was a gorgeous apartment. Ceiling, walls, and floor were incrustured with gold. Before him were the golden altar, golden table of showbread, and seven-branched golden lampstand, whose steady blaze filled the room with splendor. Beyond these hung a huge curtain of many-colored Babylonian tapestry to screen the poor priest from the awful presence of Jehovah. (About thirty-four years later this "veil" was rent from top to bottom.) Zacharias's two attendants silently spread the coals on the altar, arranged the incense, and left the priest alone till the great bell outside should again sound and notify him of the exact minute to burn the incense. From the golden splendor a Living Splendor suddenly emerged, and announced the birth of John and his glorious career. **The temple of the Lord** was, in the widest sense, a series of rectangular courts inside each other, each elevated on a terrace above that which inclosed it; all were open to the air, and divided from each other by marble balustrades, with the temple proper, a magnificent gold

"HIS LOT WAS TO BURN INCENSE."

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
10 ⁶ And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.	10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense.
11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of ⁷ the altar of incense.	11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.
12 And when Zach-a-ri'as saw him, ⁸ he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.	12 And Zach-a-ri'as was troubled when he saw him, and

⁶ Lev. 16, 17; Rev. 8, 3, 4. — ⁷ Exod. 30, 1. — ⁸ Judg. 6, 22; 13, 22; Dan. 10, 8; ver. 29; chap. 2, 9; Acts 10, 4; Rev. 1, 17.

and marble shrine, towering from the inmost and uppermost of the terraces. The whole inclosure measured about thirty-five acres. Around its edges was a series of chambers, one of which was given to each priest as his lodging place during the week when he did duty in the temple. Approaching the central shrine from these cloisters, the priest would first pass through the court of foreigners; then, mounting some steps, that of the women; then, a few steps higher, the court of the priests; and, finally, the sanctuary itself.

HEROD'S TEMPLE was the third great shrine which crowned the summit of Mount Moriah. We have more sure knowledge of its plan than of the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel. For diagrams see Lesson V, Fourth Quarter.

TRUE PRAYER IS LIKE INCENSE. "1. It is composed of the sweet spices of praise, of gratitude, of confession, of heart desires, of longing after God, of love to God and love to men. 2. It is pleasing to God. He loves to have his children pray and earnestly ask for the best things. 3. It ascends only in the flame of sincere devotion, kindled by the Holy Spirit. 4. It is offered on the golden altar of the heart, in the holy place of consecration, obedience, and love. 5. It is offered in connection with the sacrifice of Christ, in his name, and for his sake. 6. There is a peculiar power when many join together and the fragrant aroma ascends in a cloud to heaven and fills all the surrounding space with its perfume."—*Peloubet*.

10. **The whole multitude**—This was very likely a Sabbath day. But crowds gathered every day at the regular morning and evening hours of prayer. **Praying without**—In absolute silence. Call the attention of the scholar to (1) the praying people; (2) the mediating priest; (3) the answering God. The prayer "without" gave value to the incense within. **At the time of incense**—"When the priest stood by the incense altar the prayers offered in the temple courts were repeated all over the land, and in every region, however distant, to which a godly Jew had wandered. In a place so sacred, separated only by a veil from the holy of holies—that awful presence-chamber of the Almighty—at a moment so solemn, when it had fallen to him to enjoy an awful honor which most of his brethren could not expect to obtain, and which could never be repeated, Zacharias must have been well-nigh overpowered with emotion."—*Geikie*.

11. **An angel**—It was fitting that the advent of the Son of God should be heralded by miracles. The angelic apparition, the unlikelihood of so old a woman as Elizabeth to have a child, the punishment of Zacharias for disbelief, each is presented as an item of a divine plan to make the incarnation lustrous from the outset with a preternatural halo. *Lyman Abbott* calls attention to the "overture of angels" which introduced Christ to the world. Their voice is heard once by Zacharias, once by the shepherds, once by Mary, and twice by Joseph. **On the right side**—*De Wette*, *Meyer*, and *Van Oosterzee* agree that this would be regarded by a Jew as a good omen. As we have seen, the altar of incense stood in "the holy place" (one of the two rooms into which the shrine was divided) and directly in front of the curtain (or "veil," as our translation has it), which closed the entrance of the "holy of holies." The right side may refer to the position of Zacharias as he stood before the altar, or, more probably, to the altar itself.

12. **Fear fell upon him**—The best of men are terror-stricken in the presence of a messenger from God. This is due, perhaps, to a natural inference that the vision is to be a har-binger of death or of evil tidings for others. For similar incidents see Isa. 6, 5; Rev. 1, 17. *Van*

Authorized Version.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zach-a-ri'as: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife E-lis'a-beth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Revised Version.

13 fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zach-a-ri'as: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife E-lis'a-beth shall bear thee a son, and thou

* Vers. 60, 63.

Oosterzee traces this fear to the old popular belief that he who had seen God would die; but our *Dr. Curry* asks, "Rather, should not a fact so universal be referred to an original instinct of man's nature?"

"ZACHARIAS WAS TROUBLED." "Zacharias was a good man, and a good deal like other men. He doesn't seem to have been so much troubled by Herod's bad rule as he does by the angel's visit. God's messenger was more of a trouble to him than the devil's agent. That is common among men. And in another way he was like the rest of us; we are slow to recognize God's messengers when they come, and we lack the restful trust in God which would make us welcome any messenger with any message which God would send. If we could have our own way some of us would bar our doors and windows against God's messengers, and let none of them in until we were sure that they were 'all right,' and that they brought something we wanted. Yet how much of the devil's rule we stand with complacency! We are more like Zacharias in this than we are in some other things."—*H. Clay Trumbull*.

III. THE PROMISE. VERSES 13-17.

13. Fear not—So said all the heralds of the Gospel. It is God's constant response to the fears of man. **Thy prayer is heard**—Probably special prayer for a son, uttered in other days; probably also prayer for the coming of the Messiah. Indeed, the answer to prayer outlined in the next four verses meets almost every aspiration of the saint, the patriot, the priest, and the father. But at this moment Zacharias was doubtless praying for the great congregation outside and for the beloved nation it represented. It is when we are in the Christly spirit of self-sacrifice, earnestly praying for others, that God often most deliciously answers our prayers for ourselves. It was "when he prayed for his friends" that the Lord restored to the afflicted Job the blessing of his youth. **John** (or, more accurately, Jochanan, the same name as Jonah) means *Jehovah-gracious*, and "is equivalent to the beautiful German name Gotthold." (*Lange*.)

"**THY PRAYER IS HEARD.**" "Poor Zacharias was so much surprised to hear this that he did not believe it. He had more persistency in his praying than he had faith, and so he was struck dumb. If all Christians who doubted if their prayers were answered should be struck dumb there would be plenty of employment for teachers of the sign language. Ten men are ready to pray where one man is ready to trust. We tell God of our troubles, and we beg him to help us; then we feel we have done our part; but do we always believe that God has also done his part—that he has heard our prayers, and that those prayers are answered—before we have any other evidence of it than his love and his word?"—*H. Clay Trumbull*.

PRAYER FOR TEMPORAL BLESSINGS is a privilege and a duty; but we should seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Our personal choice and desire should lose themselves in our preference for the will of God. Beautiful are *Coleridge's* lines:

And if for any wish thou dar'st not pray,
Then pray to God to cast that wish away.

Illustration 2. God's answers to our prayers are sometimes so much larger than the prayers they answer that they fail to be recognized by those who receive them. A boy athirst for knowledge begs from his father money with which to purchase a cheap pictorial book of general knowledge which has charmed his eager mind. The father wisely declines to make this purchase, but instead pays his son's way through college. The boy, when classically trained, has no use for the tawdry and inaccurate book which earlier had charmed him so. The education given him by his father was the kindest and fullest answer to the request for the book, although the boy did not at first

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and ¹⁰ many shall rejoice at his birth.	14 shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.
15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and ¹¹ shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, ¹² even from his mother's womb.	15 joice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor ³ strong drink; and he shall be filled with the ⁴ Holy Ghost, even from his

¹⁰ Ver. 58.—¹¹ Num. 6. 3; Judg. 13. 4; chap. 7. 33.—¹² Jer. 1. 5; Gal. 1. 15.

³ Gr. *sikera*.—⁴ Or, *Holy Spirit*: and so throughout this book.

recognize it. Sometimes even the answer that we recognize with gratitude is a thousand times bigger than we know it to be. A child may be proud of learning the alphabet, but he can have no comprehension of the treasures of literature which the alphabet brings within his reach.

Illustration 3. "Thy prayer is heard." A poor man in Redeemed Land mourned over his poverty, and was taken at length to see his Lord's treasure houses. There he found a room called the Missed Blessings Office, full of blessings marked for him which his weak faith had not expected, and his door had been closed when they were brought. He saw another storehouse called the Delayed Blessings Office, full of good things for which the receivers were not prepared, or which were not fully ripened for their best use; they were growing, and would be sent in the fullness of time. (Condensed from "Expectation Corner," a capital booklet.)

Illustration 4. Delayed answers to prayer. "Sometimes we are not at the time of prayer prepared to receive the gift we ask for. A child is promised a collegiate education, but he cannot receive it till he has had years of training in preparatory schools. A boy is promised money as capital for entering business, but it would be worse than wasted if given into his hands before he had learned the business."—*Peloubet*.

14. The parental hopes of Zacharias were to be more than fulfilled. **Joy and gladness**—"One, the inward experience; the other, the outward expression."—*Abbott*. **Many shall rejoice**—Because his career would be so great a blessing. And, in truth, John's life has had more to do with our blessings, even in the nineteenth century, than we are apt to appreciate. See note on verse 17. All good lives are sources of happiness to the world.

THE GREAT CHARACTER now about to be described has four preeminent traits: 1. True moral and intellectual greatness; 2. Temperance and self-control; 3. Receptivity for goodness; the child's soul was to be turned into a cup to carry "the Holy Spirit." (Don't let any theological preconceptions serve to crowd aside the amazing spiritual beauty of the last promise of verse 15.) 4. Successful activity in turning men to the Lord.

15. **Great in the sight of the Lord**—As well as by human measurements. *Dr. O. W. Holmes* has shown that whenever you talk with a friend six persons may be said to take part in the conversation: your friend as you know him, your friend as he knows himself, and your friend as God knows him, on the one side, and a similar trio of conceptions of yourself. Note Jesus's conception of John (Luke 7. 28). "He was great in dauntless witness for God, in self-suppression, in yearning toward the Christ, in pointing to him, and in lowly contentment to fade in his light and decrease that he may increase."—*McLaren*. To reform Israel now was a giant's task, and God sent a giant. The work he had to do could be done by no man less gifted. The gospels uniformly attest John's surpassing intellectual ability as well as his godly earnestness. **Neither wine nor strong drink**—This is generally understood to be a command to bring up John as a Nazarite. See note on THE NAZARITE at the end of this lesson. "As the leper was the living symbol of *sin*, so was the Nazarite the living symbol of holiness."—*Brown*. Even so great and good a man as John the Baptist would have been unfit for his mission if he had drunk intoxicants; and the worst intoxicants they had in those days were light and harmless compared with ours; for "the chemical art of distilling the modern inflaming liquors was unknown to the ancients." (*Whedon*.) **Filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb**—Shall be given prophetic inspiration (Isa. 11. 2; Joel 2. 28; Eph. 5. 16) and show tokens from earliest childhood of his fitness for his lifework (Gal. 1. 15). "A similar contrast between the false and hateful excitement of drunkenness and the divine exaltation of spiritual fervor is found in Eph. 5. 18. Compare Acts 2. 13."—*Farrar*.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
16 ¹³ And many of the children of Is'ra-el shall he turn to the Lord their God.	16 mother's womb. And many of the children of Is'ra-el shall he turn unto the Lord
17 ¹⁴ And he shall go before him in the	17 their God. And he shall ⁵ go before his
¹³ Mal. 4. 5, 6.— ¹⁴ Mal. 4. 5; Matt. 11. 14; Mark 9. 12.	⁵ Some ancient authorities read <i>come nigh before his face</i> .

"GREAT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD. And yet this child was to occupy no throne like Herod's, to propound no philosophy like Socrates, to found no church like Paul, and to write no book like John. He was to preach for a little while, and then he was to be arrested and thrown into prison, and then—to be ignominiously beheaded. No very bright outlook, surely, if the father could have foreseen this all. But remember, his greatness was to be 'in the sight of the Lord.' I may be poor, and ignorant, and unknown, an invalid and short-lived, and yet I may be 'great in the sight of the Lord.' Many are to-day thinking that they have hard luck because they have no chance to win the prizes of this world, but eternal renown is as free to them as to any of earth's most favored ones."—*H. Clay Trumbull.*

GREATNESS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD is greatness of quality, not of proportion. No man is great in the sight of man who has not large qualities—unusual force of will or large wisdom, unusual astuteness, great eloquence, or some other large "faculty," where his fellows have only small "faculty." It is true that some people seem tall and large simply because they stand on large and tall pedestals, they themselves being as small or smaller than their fellows. But as a rule largeness of power is man's measure of greatness. God's measure of greatness is goodness. If the mothers of most men who have been great in the sight of the world could have foreseen their sons' lives they would have thanked God if they had died in the cradle. Napoleon Bonaparte's mother was, naturally, proud of her son till the hour of her death, but she hardened as he hardened. If, when she caressed him in infancy, some one had foretold the hundreds of thousands of painful deaths his bloody career would cause it would have been a shocking revelation to her. Some of the greatest men in the sight of the world have wrought far more evil than good, but to have a child great in the sight of the Lord is cause for un-mixed joy.

Illustration 5. Men are "great in the sight of the Lord" when they carry out in detail God's plans for their lives. One day I went into a printing office where a huge press was being put up. The workmen, who evidently knew very little of the details of the machine, obeyed the directions of one man who undertook to interpret the plan of the inventor. At last the press was put together and the wheels were made to revolve. Then it was discovered that something was wrong. The drawings of the inventor had been wrongly interpreted, either by the makers of the machine or by him who attempted to put it in place. So back of our lives stands God, the great designer of our destiny. He has planned a work for us. Parents and teachers at the outset, and later we ourselves, seek, or should seek, to interpret his plan. That plan is never faulty, never hard to understand, for the inventor himself, full of sympathy, is close at hand to help us in our endeavor.

16. Many—"All the land of Judea" (Mark 1. 5). **Shall he turn**—By his preaching (Luke 3. 10-14). "The work of John was a concentration of the spirit of the law."—*Alford.* It is not God who needs to be reconciled to us, but we need to be reconciled to God.

Illustration 6. Tell *Thomas Moore's* beautiful story of Paradise and the Peri. A peri is in Eastern mythology a gentle fairylike being of good impulse, but the offspring of fallen angels. A peri was told she would be admitted into heaven if she would bring thither the gift most acceptable to the Almighty. She first brought a drop of a young patriot's blood, shed on his country's behalf; but the gates would not open for such an offering. She next took the last sigh of a damsel who had died nursing her lover stricken by the plague; but the gates would not open for such an offering. She then carried up the repentant tear of an old man converted by the prayers of a child. All heaven rejoiced, the gates were flung open, and the peri was received with a joyous welcome. ("Lalla Rookh," Second Tale.)

17. Notice the Revised Version of this verse, which is far better. **Shall go before him**—Shall herald his approach; shall swing back the door for the entrance of that Incomparable Jew whom all the prophets had foretold, whose personality is so matchless that a mere pro-

Authorized Version.
spirit and power of E-li'as, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient *a* to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Revised Version.
face in the spirit and power of E-li'jah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient *to walk* in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for *him*.

a Or, by.

noun is enough to identify Him. The allusion here is to a courier of a king. See ILLUSTRATION 8. **In the spirit and power of Elias**—The Jews believed that Elijah would really return to earth, and the Lord Jesus seems to have had difficulty in making Malachi's true meaning plain even to the apostles. Compare Matt. 11. 14 with Matt. 17. 10-14. The resemblance, says *Canon Farrar*, was partly in external aspect, but more in his mission of stern rebuke and invitation to repentance. "The same concentrated energy and sternness; the same work—to arrest the decay of faith and restore nobler life; the same undaunted courage, so that of each might be said what was said of one not unlike them in his strong character, 'Here lies one who never feared the face of man;' the same relations to rulers, so that Elijah, Ahab, and Jezebel have doubles in John, Herod the younger, and Herodias; the same asceticism; the same solitary life—these are the salient features of likeness."—*McLaren*. **To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children**—Mal. 4. 6. "Men's hard hearts shall be softened as a result of John's influence. Perhaps the special meaning here, as in Malachi, is that John was to remedy disunion and to restore family life."—*Farrar*. "But the meaning may be, however, that John was to restore to the people of his day the devout disposition of their fathers."—*Alford*. Our attention is not often turned to the thorough and sweeping reformation wrought by John. It is doubtful whether, without him as a forerunner, Jesus's ministry could have lasted even three years. "Were the fathers' hearts ever turned away from the children? Yes, indeed, they were; and in the church at that. The fact is, the devil is continually getting the hearts of the fathers turned away from the children, and the first thing to be done in preparing any people for the Lord is to get the parents' hearts turned back again to the children. The devil is always suggesting that the minister would better give his strength to the old folks and let the children be cared for by somebody else."—*H. Clay Trumbull*. **The wisdom of the just**—The spiritual prudence which recognizes the loss that follows unrighteousness.

Illustration 7. "Marvelously beautiful is this. Verily the two Testaments, like the two cherubim in the 'most holy place' of God's temple in Jerusalem, bend toward each other and touch with tenderness. As with their outward wings they touch the two far sides of God's Temple of Time—from 'In the beginning' to 'Come, Lord Jesus'—so with their inner wings they caress each other, the end of the law overlapping the beginning of the Gospel; for the words of Malachi, the last Old Testament prophet, are the words of the first New Testament angel who spoke to Zacharias (Mal. 4. 6; Luke 1. 17)."—*Lightfoot*.

Illustration 8. "Twenty years ago I saw the runner before an Eastern monarch. He flashes before me often now, erect, springy, heels seldom touching the ground, unwearied, dressed in white, except his dark legs and arms. How the sunshine loved his playing muscles! His clear voice I yet hear—"Make way for the king!"—*Bishop Warren*. John was a spiritual athlete who scorned the soft and silken ways of delight, and gladly girded up his loins to run before the chariot of the King.

Illustration 9. The ancients had a favorite problem: If a horse were placed equally distant from two equally attractive loads of hay, which would he choose? And they decided that the horse would starve to death before he could determine to which haystack he would go. After that problem a little, and fancy each apparent haystack to have been found by the horse unsatisfying, and you have a fitting parable of the sad condition in which most of the world, Jewish and pagan alike, found itself when John and Jesus came. Between ritual and philosophy it stood, with intense spiritual hunger, and sought to satisfy its longings in turn by each, to be bitterly disappointed by both. "The wisdom of the just," which only can satisfy the human heart, had almost vanished from the earth. John was now sent to direct men toward that wisdom; for the divine supply was now about to come.

THE NAZARITE.

"One who is separated from others and consecrated to God. The Nazarite vow is prescribed in Num. 6. 2-21. It involved (1) absence from wine and strong drink; (2) refraining from cutting the hair off the head during the whole continuance of the vow; (3) the avoidance of contact with the dead. There is no mention of any Nazarite before Samson, yet it is evident they existed before the time of Moses. Paul took on himself twice the Nazarite vow (Acts 18. 18; 21. 23-26). As to the duration of the vow, every one was left at liberty to fix his own time. There is mention made in Scripture of only three who were Nazarites for life—Samson (Judg. 13. 4, 5), Samuel (1 Sam. 1. 11), and John the Baptist."—*N. G. Easton*. The idea underlying the Nazarite vow was not peculiar to the Mosaic dispensation. There is something like it traceable in the earliest Egyptian records in Heliopolis in the temple of the sun. The reason for total abstinence from intoxicants was that there might be no suspicion that those who were emotionally exercised by the Spirit were under the influence of any physical excitement such as might be produced by the use of stimulating drinks. The idea, and the degenerate representative, almost the caricature, of the ancient Nazarite is yet to be seen in the holy dervish of the Mohammedan. He too abstains from wine and strong drink, is forbidden to cut his hair or his beard, and dresses in the coarsest stuff. He has no settled home, and lives on alms. Sad to say, he is usually very dirty; yet he is revered as having an afflatus of divinity. He claims a direct inspiration and a prophetic power, though generally illiterate and unable to expound the Koran. Thus has man distorted the holy office of the Forerunner.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

When on special occasions the President of the United States travels by rail a special train is placed at his service, the train is kept clear of all other trains, and doubly guarded against accidents. Besides all this a locomotive is sent out in advance, at least a half mile in advance of the presidential train, to prove that the way is clear. So before the King comes to his inheritance a forerunner is sent to prepare his way. Notice concerning **This Forerunner**—

PRESENT PROPHETS.

PREACHING REPENTANCE
PRACTICING RELIGION

BY

WORD AND WORKS.

PREPARING THE WAY FOR CHRIST.

HAVE YOU DONE THIS?

YES? CONTINUE.

NO? BEGIN.

I. His Ancestry. Verse 5. Heredity counts for something, though not for every thing. John the Baptist came from a line of priests on both sides. For a thousand years his ancestors had taken part in the magnificent ritual of worship in the temple.

II. His Home. Verses 6, 7. He was environed with righteousness, godliness, and prayer, even from his childhood. Here was a preparation for a noble character.

III. His Greatness. Verses 13-15. Learn the distinction between greatness in the sight of men and in the sight of God. This youth, slain by a sensual king to please a dancing girl, God calls great.

IV. His Self-denial. Verse 15. His abstinence from strong drink was only an instance of his general self-denying character, in dress, in food, in aims of life, in his willing abnegation and self-effacement in relation to Christ.

V. His Endowment. Verse 15. He did not possess wealth, nor social position, nor the regard of rulers; but he was "filled with the Holy Ghost," the divine power, richest of all blessings.

VI. His Mission. Verses 16, 17. Threefold: 1. To bring men to God. 2. To prepare

the way for One greater. 3. To unite old and young in new bonds. Just such a man was needed to accomplish just such a work. To the people of his own time John's life seemed a failure; to us it now shows forth as a success.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

The annunciation of John the Baptist, *Edersheim's* "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," i, 133-143. John and his mission, *Farrar's* "Life of Christ," i, 104-118. Zacharias and Elisabeth, *Andrews's* "Life of our Lord," 45-48; *Edersheim*, i, 135-158. The priest's office, duties, and courses, *Edersheim*, i, 122-144; *Stapfer's* "Palestine in the Time of Christ," 426-439. John's relation to Elias, *Tuck's* "Difficulties," 488-489; *Andrews*, 324, 325. John a forerunner of Christ, *Stapfer*, 499; *Edersheim*, i, 342-345; *Andrews*, 159-161. *Bishop Hall* has a notable sermon on "The Angel and Zacharias."



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS I AND II.

1. Zacharias is stricken dumb as a sign of the verity of Gabriel's promise (Luke 1. 18-25). 2. The annunciation to Mary (Luke 1. 26-38). 3. The annunciation to Joseph (Matt. 1. 18-25). 4. Mary's visit to Elisabeth (Luke 1. 39-56). 5. The birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1. 57-80). 6. The birth of Jesus the Christ (Luke 2. 1-7; Matt. 1. 18-25). 7. The angels and the shepherds (Luke 2. 8-20). 8. The circumcision (Luke 2. 21.) 9. The presentation in the temple (Luke 2. 22-39). 10. The Wise Men from the East (Matt. 2. 1-12). 11. The flight into Egypt, and return to Nazareth (Matt. 2. 13-23). 12. Childhood at Nazareth (Matt. 2. 23; Luke 2. 39, 40), the last-mentioned verse being the first verse of our lesson. These Connecting Links reach from the end of B. C. 3, or possibly the beginning of B. C. 4, to the spring of A. D. 9.



LESSON II.—JANUARY 12.

THE BOY JESUS.—LUKE 2. 40-52.

[Study whole chapter, Luke 2.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.—Luke 2. 52.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—The spring of A. D. 9. The passover was that year March 29 (*Lewin*), and Joseph and Mary left for home during the very early days of April.

PLACES.—1. *Nazareth*, about six miles northwest from Mount Tabor, and about twenty-five miles from the south end of the Sea of Galilee; it is described under verse 51. 2. *Jerusalem*.

SYNCHRONISTIC NOTE.—During the twelve years which followed the birth of Jesus many changes have taken place in the great world. Augustus still holds the scepter of Rome, but Herod the Great has ended his wicked reign, and his dominions have been divided among his four sons. It was when Jesus was ten years old that the "autonomy" (to use a modern phrase) of the Herodian kings was abolished, and a Roman governor, Roman soldiers and centurions, Roman coinage, etc., came into Judea, and that the independent spirit of the Jews was manifested in the revolt of Judas of Galilee against the "taxing" (Acts 5. 37). Herod Antipapas, who killed John and mocked Jesus, already ruled Galilee and Perea. We should think of the ardent Messianic hopes rising in thousands of hearts while the true Messiah was growing up unnoticed in the secluded little town.

WHAT THIS STORY STANDS FOR.—Writers of biographical sketches, and lecturers

on great men, always seek to bring forward some illustration from their hero's earlier years of the particular character or gift which afterward led him on to fame. If he be a preacher, we hear of his having harangued his little brothers and sisters in the nursery, like Dean Alford; if he be a musician, of his composing some wonderful piece at eight years old, like Mozart; if a scientific inventor, of his nearly blowing up his father's house with chemicals, like Humphry Davy. And very often a single incident is dwelt upon, while all the rest of the younger days are passed over. What story of Giotto the painter



THE END OF "A DAY'S JOURNEY."

is complete without the anecdote of his drawing rough sketches of his sheep upon bits of stone? Or of Washington, without the touching incident of his abandoning a sea life when on the point of sailing, because of his mother's tears? Or of Napoleon, without his victory won with snow-balls against his intrenched schoolmates? Or of Nelson, without his boyish reply to his grandmother's inquiry whether he had not felt fear in a certain position of peril—"What is fear?" In cases like these we see the truth of the proverb, "The child is father to the man." We may say, without irreverence, that the evangelist Luke has here done the same thing.

LESSON HYMN.—

By cool Siloam's shady rill How sweet the lily grows !
How sweet the breath, beneath the hill, Of Sharon's dewy rose !
O Thou, whose infant feet were found within thy Father's shrine,
Whose years, with changeless virtue crowned, Were all alike divine;
Dependent on thy bounteous breath, We seek thy grace alone,
In childhood, manhood, age, and death, To keep us still thine own.—*Reginald Heber.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (January 6), The Boy Jesus, Luke 2. 40-52. *Tuesday*, The passover feast, Deut. 16. 1-8. *Wednesday*, Youthful piety, 2 Chron. 34. 1-7. *Thursday*, Seeking after wisdom, Prov. 4. 1-13. *Friday*, The Father's business, John 5. 17-24. *Saturday*, The best knowledge, 2 Tim. 3. 10-17. *Sunday*, Growing in grace, 2 Peter 3. 11-18.

Authorized Version.40 ¹ And the child grew, and waxed strong**Revised Version.**

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong,

¹ Ver. 52; chap. 1. 80.**I. LOST IN THE CITY. VERSES 40-45.**

40. The child grew—Body, mind, and soul grew in vigorous health. He was the Son of man—Humanity's consummate Flower—and his stainless childhood must have been indescribably attractive. He simply "grew." To grow is *your* highest and holiest duty to-day. "He must have been thoroughly childlike—essentially like other children—for in later years his

Authorised Version.
in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.
41 Now his parents went to Je-ru'sa-lem every year at the feast of the passover.

² Exod. 23. 15, 17; 34. 23; Deut. 16. 1, 16.

Revised Version.
¹ filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.
41 And his parents went every year to Je-ru'sa-lem at the feast of the passover.

¹ Gr. *becoming full of wisdom.*

brethren thought his fame strange, and his townsmen, the comrades of his boyhood, rejected him, with surprise at his assumption."—*Rule*. It is notable what sort of a home God chose for his Son—a carpenter's cot in a mountain village, with fresh air, rugged natural beauty, thrifty poverty, and simple piety all about. There was hardly a spot on which his boyish eyes could light which had not been the scene of some splendid chapter of national history. And who had been chief among the nation's heroes? His ancestors. **Waxed**—Increased. Doubtless **HARD STUDY** had much to do with this growth. "Even eighty years before Christ schools flourished throughout the length and breadth of the land: education had been made compulsory. While there is not a single term for 'school' to be found before the Captivity, there were about this time a dozen in common usage. Here are a few of the innumerable popular sayings of the period: 'The world is only saved by the breath of the school children.' 'Even for the rebuilding of the temple the schools must not be interrupted.'"—*Emanuel Deutsch*. It was from that section of the Book of Deuteronomy which every child learned as its first catechism that Jesus long after drew the texts with which he foiled the tempter. **WORSHIP** also was an element of his growth. We can think of him in the synagogue every Sabbath ("as his custom was"). **Strong in spirit**—The last two words are omitted from some of the best manuscripts; but spiritual wisdom seems to have been the most notable feature in Jesus's development, as "strength" was John the Baptist's most notable trait. "Spiritual strength," says *Frederick William Robertson*, "requires two things: strong feelings and strong command over them. You must measure the strength of a man by the power of the feelings which he subdues, not by the power of those which subdue him." **Filled with wisdom**—Better, "filling with wisdom."

You cannot well imagine such a boy smoking cigarettes, chewing gum, gambling, whether with marbles or cards, drinking intoxicants, or reveling in smutty stories—no, not even lounging at street corners. **The grace of God**—The divine favor. See John 1. 14; Isa. 11. 2, 3.

A REAL BOY. One practical difficulty in teaching this lesson is that children generally conceive of Jesus as one to whom goodness was so easy that it had no merit, who was altogether above the petty trials and difficulties of child-life, and who could not feel as children feel. The teacher should, therefore, strive to exhibit him as a *real boy*. By so doing his divinity will not be obscured, but enhanced.

41. Feast of the passover—"The annual festival of the passover was of most joyful character; it extended through a whole week, and commemorated the Hebrews' departure from Egypt and the preservation of their firstborn on the night when the firstborn of Egypt were slain. The name in English, as in Hebrew, expresses the design of the celebration. See

Exod. 12. It is also called the festival of unleavened bread (see Mark 14. 1; Luke 22. 1) because during the whole of the festival the people ate unleavened bread."—*Ripley*. Every male Israelite was bound to make this pilgrimage to **Jerusalem**, and many pious people believed women also should go. Only "the sick, the aged, boys under twelve, the blind, the deaf, and lunatics" were permitted to remain at home. There were three great yearly festivals—



THE LEADER OF THE CARAVAN.

Authorized Version.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Je-ru'sa-lem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had ³fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Je'sus tarried behind in Je-ru'sa-lem; and Jo'seph and his mother knew not of it.

Revised Version.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast;

43 and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Je'sus tarried behind in Je-ru'sa-lem; and his parents

³ 2 Chron. 30. 21.

Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Incidentally we should note the great advantages they brought to the Jewish nation: they intensified religious feeling, conserved theology, maintained national unity, and added greatly to social progress. Christianity makes no detailed demands on our time or money, for it claims all of both. But Christians, like their Master, should be careful to fulfill all proper religious customs. *Burkitt* shrewdly remarks that although it is no certain evidence of grace to frequent public assemblies for worship it is an unfailing sign of the want of grace to neglect them.

42. Twelve years old—His twelfth birthday made him a "son of the law," and on it he began to incur legal obligation. Jewish customs were very precise. When Jesus was weaned, at the age of three, he began to wear a fringed coat. See Num. 15. 38-41, and Deut. 22. 12. Two years later he was set to memorize a small portion of the "law" as a daily lesson. Now, at the age of twelve, he must wear a "phylactery," for he was regarded as "grown up;" he must go to the passover feast at Jerusalem, and on his return he must begin to learn a trade. "At the age of twelve an Eastern boy is far more mature than is the case in Europe and America, and a far wider liberty is allowed him."—*Farrar*. **They went up**—*Abbott* and others believe that this was the first visit of Jesus to Jerusalem; *Alford* thinks that this cannot be inferred from the narrative. In any case his young eyes must have drunk in many things, delightful and ominous. To follow the narrative here one must imagine the delightful hopes which would arise in this Boy's heart when his parents arranged for this trip to Jerusalem; the long journey thither, occupying three or four days, or more, and probably made by crossing the Jordan near the south end of Lake Gennesaret, and slowly walking with the rest of the caravan from Nazareth through the rural towns of Perea, a region at that time rich with trees and fountains, and thickly populated; then the entry into Jerusalem, and the days spent there in devout formal worship. **After the custom**—In the usual way; that is, by a caravan. A large number of families from Nazareth and vicinity would make the journey together, for the sake of both convenience and safety.



A DOCTOR OF THE LAW.

43. Fulfilled the days—The entire festival was seven days long, but you might return home after the third day. It seems probable, though it is not certain, that Jesus's parents set out for Nazareth before the close of the feast. **As they returned**—While the active men were preparing to get the caravan together. **The child Jesus**—Revised Version, "the boy Jesus." **Tarried behind**—Probably the three or four days already spent in Jerusalem had been passed almost entirely within the temple courts. They were the center of interest for all devout Jews. The temple included all attractions for a crowd—it was the holiest of shrines, the busiest of marts, the most magnificent of promenades, and the most distinctly national of all the structures of the capital. In this his earliest experience of homelessness he would naturally turn thither. **Knew not of it**—The male population of Jerusalem at the passover season

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
44 But they, supposing him to have been ⁴ in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among <i>their</i> kinsfolk and acquaintance.	44 knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk
45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Je-ru'sa-lem, seeking him.	45 and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Je-ru'sa-lem,
46 And it came to pass, that ⁵ after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in	46 seeking for him. And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the
⁴ Psalms 42. 4; 122. 1, 4; Isa. 2. 3.— ⁵ 1 Kings 12. 5, 12.	

was estimated at nearly three millions. "In such a crowd it was easy to be lost." In the caravans of Galilean pilgrims the children seem to have usually traveled together, and it is not strange that Joseph and Mary lost sight of Jesus for three or four hours. A traveled friend tells me that this incident was repeated only last year in the expedition of the pilgrims to bathe in the pools of the Jordan. Whether Jesus intentionally remained behind, to teach his parents the lesson that we are ourselves to receive from this narrative, or whether he made a mistake such as any other child might have done in the same circumstances, depends on whether or not the divinity of his nature was perfectly revealed before his human powers reached maturity. It is a question of deep interest, but not of any practical importance. No sure answer can be given, and the time spent upon it is wasted.

Illustration 10. The self-reliance of this Boy "merits our attention. Many children grow up like plants under bell-glasses. They are surrounded only by artificial and prepared influences. They are house-bred, room-bred, mother-bred—everything but *self-bred*. The object of training is to teach the child to take care of himself; but many parents use their children only as a kind of spool on which to reel off their own experiences; and they are bound and corded until they perish by infamy, or break all bonds and cords and rush to ruin by reaction."—*Beecher*.

44. Company—The word means a company that travel together, one of the caravans that had come from Nazareth. The caravan may have been a large one, moving along the winding road in various groups. His parents supposed they should find him in one of these groups when the whole company had gathered at the appointed halting-place at nightfall. "In such pilgrim bands the women and elderly men are mounted; the younger men walk; drums and timbrels enliven the march; the caravan stops at every spring or well; dates, melons, cucumbers are passed around to refresh the pilgrims; the occasion is one of innocent mirth and festivity; the children walk and play by the side of their parents, and wander from one group to another, often getting a ride, when wearied, on some camel or mule less heavily loaded than the rest."—*Abbott*. **A day's journey**—The first day's journey of a caravan was proverbially short, not more than six or eight miles. When fully under way caravans go about twenty-five miles a day. El Bireh, six miles north of Jerusalem, is said to be the place where Joseph's caravan stopped. **They sought**—The Greek word represents a prolonged search.

II. FOUND IN THE TEMPLE. VERSES 46-52.

46. After three days—On the third day. *Lange* suggests that one day was spent in departure, one in return, and one in search. But they probably had not set out until late in the afternoon of the first day, and only three or four hours would be required to bring them back to Jerusalem from this first night's stopping place. The search was probably long and tedious. An ancient city, without street numbers or directories, with a million of pilgrims packed into an area less than a quarter the size of Philadelphia, would present unspeakable difficulties. Then, too, Joseph and Mary very evidently had failed to understand Jesus, and would not readily look for him in the right place. **In the temple**—"The members of the temple Sanhedrin, who on ordinary days sat as a court of appeal from the close of the morning to the time

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.	temple, sitting in the midst of the ² doctors, both hearing them, and asking them
47 And ⁶ all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.	47 questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his an-
48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.	48 swers. And when they saw him, they were astonished: and his mother said unto him, ² Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee

* Matt. 7. 28; Mark 1, 22; chap. 4. 22, 23; John 7. 15, 46.

* Or, teachers.—² *Or. Child.*

of the evening sacrifice, were wont upon Sabbaths and feast days to come out upon the terrace of the temple, and there to teach. In such popular instruction the utmost latitude of questioning would be given. It is in this audience, which sat upon the ground, surrounding and mingling with the doctors—and hence during, not after, the feast—that we must seek the child Jesus.”—*Edersheim*. **Sitting**—In the customary attitude of a pupil. In Mohammedan mosques pupils may frequently be seen sitting on the floor in semicircles “at the feet” of an instructor. **Doctors**—“The rabbis, the professional expounders of the Mosaic law. Some of the greatest teachers of Jewish history were then alive and may have been present: the venerable Hillel, verging upon his hundredth year; his son and successor, Simeon; his grandson, the then youthful Gamaliel; Jonathan, the writer of the Chaldee Targum or Paraphrase of the Sacred Books; and Shammai, the rival of Hillel, who ‘bound’ where the latter ‘loosed’; possibly also Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.”—*Ellicott*. **Asking them questions**—His questions were suggested by their teaching. “Great liberty was allowed to auditors and students.”—*Killo*. “Much have I learned from the rabbis my teachers,” said an old rabbi; “more have I learned from the rabbis my colleagues; but from my scholars have I learned most of all.”

47. Astonished—“Amazed; astounded.” **Understanding**—Sagacity; insight of scriptural truth. **Answers**—Here was already a manifestation of that mental readiness which became one of our Lord’s most notable traits. “But doubtless his depth of spiritual insight also astonished them.”—*Abbott*. “The kind of questions current in the schools would include such as, What is the greatest commandment of the law? What may or may not be done on the Sabbath? How is such a precept to be paraphrased? What is its true meaning? The expectations of the Christ; and the like.”—*Ellicott*. Words which would forfeit the character—perhaps the life—of a man might be uttered by a boy with applause.

BIBLE STUDY FOR CHILDREN. “1. Every child should be trained to an interest in Bible study. 2. He should be taught, not by lecture, but by question and answer. 3. Every child should study the Bible for himself, and think upon it; he should, in particular, prepare his Sunday school lessons, and daily study, as well as read, the word of God. 4. He should come to his teacher as a learner, modestly, but ready to ask questions. 5. The best teachers come to God’s word in the spirit of a child. 6. The presence of children in the teaching service of the Church tends to make prominent the great essentials of divine truth, and tends to the clear, vivid, simple, effective presentation of these truths.”—*Peloubet*.

48. Amazed—To find him so employed in such a place. The rabbis demanded and received very marked deference from the common people. The child’s boldness in presuming to hold discussion with these learned men was in strange contrast with the modesty he had hitherto manifested. Evidently he had never revealed himself at home like this. Parents and teachers should study the traits young folks exhibit to others; such traits are the keynotes of their characters. **Why hast thou thus dealt with us**—An expression of joyful surprise, with only the mildest possible shading of reproof. **Thy father**—“No mythical writer would have suffered Mary to speak of Joseph as the father of Jesus. Yet this would have been exactly her language; in any case he stood in the place of one, and how else could she

Authorized Version.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about ¹my Father's business?

50 And ⁸they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Naz'a-reth, and was subject unto them:

Revised Version.

49 sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I

50 must be ⁴in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying which he

51 spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Naz'a-reth; and he was

¹ Psalm 40. 8; Mal. 3. 1; John 2. 16.—⁸ Chap. 9. 45; 18. 34.

⁴ Or, about my Father's business. Gr. in the things of my Father.



"THY FATHER AND I HAVE SOUGHT THEE SORROWING."

speak?"—*Abbott*. Sought thee sorrowing—Better, "sought thee with aching heart." It had given her an appalling sensation to find that such a child was lost.

49. He said—This is the first recorded saying of Jesus. How is it that ye sought me—Why did you not come at once to the temple? for where else would I be? **Must**

"is a word often used by Jesus concerning his own appointed work, and expressing both the inevitable fulfillment of the divine counsels and the absolute constraint of the principle of duty upon himself. See Matt. 16. 21; 26. 54; Mark 8. 31; Luke 4. 43; 9. 22; 13. 33; 24. 7, 26, 46; John 3. 14; 4. 4; 12. 34."

M. R. Vincent. About my Father's business

—In the Greek no noun is given—"in the of my Father;" nearer the meaning would be, "in my Father's things," or perhaps, as in Revised Version, "in my Father's house." Some have followed *Theophylact* in supposing that Jesus emphasized the "my" in reply to Mary's "thy father." But there is no such antithesis in the words.

Illustration 11. When Sir Thomas More took office it was with the open stipulation, "First to look to God, and after God to the king."

Illustration 12. When during his first agreeable furlough and happy marriage (1840-1842), after the terrible rising of the Afghan tribes on the demoralized English army at Cabul, Lord Lawrence was seized with a long and dangerous illness, which made his doctors tell him he must give up all idea of returning to India, so strong was his determination to go back to his duty that he said, "If I can't live in India I must go and die there."

50. They understood not—We need not be astonished that they "understood not;" neither could we understand if we had not the wonderful life and death and resurrection of our Lord to help us. Even if they had thoroughly believed that he was to be the Messiah they could not have understood why there should be any necessity for him to seek the technical learning of the scribes. The Messiah was not to be a scribe.

51. To Nazareth—*Dr. Brown's* comment here is noteworthy: "If Jerusalem is good, Nazareth is good too; if the duties of life must give place to worship, worship in its turn must give place to the duties of life." Pictures and descriptions have made us familiar with the little out-of-the-way town; and the "low, undulating ridge of hills inclosing the green plain that lies like a lake, with Nazareth built on one of its shores" (as *Dr. McLeod* expresses it); and the crag or rock from which the townsmen attempted to hurl Jesus in after years; and the well to which Mary must have resorted like other women. Was subject—Remained so,

Authorized Version.

but his mother ⁹ kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Je'sus ¹⁰ increased in wisdom and ^a stature, and in favor with God and man.

Revised Version.

subject unto them : and his mother kept all *these* ^a sayings in her heart.

52 And Je'sus advanced in wisdom and ^b stature, and in ^c favor with God and men.

⁹ Ver. 19; Dan. 7. 28.—¹⁰ 1 Sam. 2. 26; ver. 40.—^a Or, *age*.

^a Or, *things*.—^b Or, *age*.—^c Or, *grace*.

from his twelfth to his thirtieth year. Mark 6. 3 would seem to indicate that he took up his father's trade and became a "carpenter," or, as we would say, "a cabinet-maker." Henceforth, until the appointed time, he made no further manifestations of an exceptional intellectual and spiritual endowment, so far as we know. From the fact that Joseph is not again mentioned it has been inferred that he died not long after this. **Kept all these sayings in her heart—**



GOING UP TO THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER.

"Observe that she did not keep these sayings in her memory, or her understanding, or her diary, but in her heart."—*Bushnell*. To modestly repeat some of our deeper experiences may help others ; to silently brood over them will certainly help ourselves.

52. The brief statements of this verse are incomparably nobler than the inventions, at once clumsy and flimsy, of the apocryphal gospels. An ancient writer has beautifully said, "His doing nothing wonderful is itself a kind of wonder." His growth was fourfold—in stature, in wisdom, in the favor of God, and in popularity. The sweet grace of the Spirit of God made him lovable. There is not a youth or maiden who may not so live that this verse shall be true of him. "Jesus grew up among a people seldom and only contemptuously named by the ancient classics, and subjected at the time to the yoke of a foreign oppressor, in a remote and conquered province of the Roman empire, in the darkest district of Palestine, in a little country town of proverbial insignificance, in poverty and manual labor, in the obscurity of a carpenter's shop, far away from universities, academies, libraries, and literary or polished society, without any help, so far as we know, except the parental care, the daily wonders of nature, the Old Testament Scriptures, the weekly Sabbath services of the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4. 16), the annual festivals in the temple of Jerusalem (Luke 2. 42), and the secret intercourse of his soul with God, his heavenly Father."—*Schaff*. **In favor with God and man**—God loves purity. So do men *so long as they do not feel its rebuke*. It was in accordance with the deepest laws of human nature that the Nazarenes should hold the Boy "in favor" and "cast out" the Man.

JESUS'S PHYSICAL GROWTH has its lessons for us. It is an old proverb that a sound mind

needs a sound body to maintain it. Young people who are careless of nature's laws inevitably suffer the penalty. No man can wrong his body without a lessening of his intellectual vigor and moral force. Our bodies are talents intrusted to us by our heavenly Father, and we should hold them as sacred to his service as we hold our minds and our souls.

JESUS'S INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT is a model for us. God might have endowed him at the outset with infinite knowledge. His increase in wisdom is a beautiful illustration of the divine purpose that the Messiah should be in very truth the Son of man, developing from the weakness of infancy to the strength and wisdom of maturity. Your mind has been intrusted to you by the same kind God. Develop your intellect.

JESUS GREW IN HIS SPIRITUAL NATURE. His youth was formative, as our young days are, and as really probationary as are ours. His temptations were as real. His youth presented to the eyes of God and man a threefold growth. Let your youth do the same.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

What Kind of a Boy was Jesus? From this lesson, and from other hints in the gospels, we can learn much about the traits of Jesus in his youth.

I. A Human Boy. He was not a God in the fashion of a child, but a thoroughly natural human being. There was nothing strange or superhuman in his traits. No awe or reverence seems to have been inspired by his personality in childhood. He ate and drank, prayed and slept, enjoyed life, with all the heartiness of a boy. Both in his life, and also in his teaching, he ever honored a healthy fondness for outdoor life. He was no brooding, dreaming, introspective youth.

II. A Country Boy. He lived in a village, in a remote province, far from the excitement and vices of a great city. More noble and great men have come from country farmhouses than from city palaces.

III. A Working-man's Boy. Joseph was a carpenter, and Jesus followed the same trade (Matt. 13. 55; Mark 6. 3). He grew up with a sympathy for the common people, and a sense of their needs, their sorrows, and their aspirations, which is expressed strongly in all his teachings; for example, the Beatitudes, also Matt. 11. 28-30.

IV. A Worshipping Boy. He went to the synagogue service regularly (Luke 4. 16). He loved the temple, and forgot his home while lingering in its courts (verses 43-46). He was interested in God's word and familiar with it, though he probably never possessed a Bible of his own. His was a holy childhood, while unaffected and free from cant.

V. An Intelligent Boy. He was "filled with wisdom" (verse 40); interested in thoughtful themes; able to converse with older people. He was not, as has been represented, "disputing with the doctors in the temple," but "hearing them and asking them questions" (verse 46). It is evident that a mighty aspiration, a lofty dream of life, was rising within his soul (verse 49).

VI. An Obedient Boy. When a youth lives in a realm of knowledge and thought above that of his parents he is often inclined to be supercilious and contemptuous toward their life; to complain of his lot and to despise its drudgery. But Jesus, with his growing endowment and consciousness, was subject to his parents, took up the common tasks of life, and was content to be a carpenter in Nazareth.

VII. A Popular Boy. His was not the goodness that repels. He won favor from

THE BOY JESUS GROWING <small>IN</small> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> WISDOM <small>BY</small> STUDY. </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> STATURE <small>BY</small> EXERCISE. </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> FAVOR <small>BY</small> OBEDIENCE. </td> </tr> </table>			WISDOM <small>BY</small> STUDY.	STATURE <small>BY</small> EXERCISE.	FAVOR <small>BY</small> OBEDIENCE.					
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FOLLOW HIM. <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">STUDY</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">EXERCISE</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">THE</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">BOOK.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="padding: 5px;">LIVE THE TRUTH.</td> </tr> </table>			STUDY	EXERCISE	THE	BOOK.	LIVE THE TRUTH.			
STUDY	EXERCISE	THE	BOOK.							
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all who knew him (verse 52). He was no recluse, no cynic, but a noble-spirited, wholesome youth, whose godliness was full of sunshine. He drew people toward him in youth, as he drew them in his manhood.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

Dr. Trumbull in his "Yale Lectures on the Sunday School" gives an excellent account of the methods of Jewish teaching. The first three pages of *Thomas Hughes's* "Manliness of Christ" bear on topics connected with this lesson. *Lew Wallace's* "Ben-Hur" throws light on the time. The related passages in the standard Lives of Jesus—*Edersheim* (i, 217-254), *Hanna, Geikie, Farrar* (i, 55-104), *Deems*, etc.—should be referred to by all who have them within reach; especially the passage descriptive of home life in Nazareth, in *Farrar*, i, 61, etc. There is a good passage on the same subject in *Stapfer's* "Palestine in the Time of Christ," 440-446. See also the passage on Jesus in the temple, in *Edersheim's* "Temple and its Services," and the remarks on the early years of Christ in *President Woolsey's* "Religion of the Present and Future." *F. W. Robertson's* sermon on the "Early Development of Jesus," in his Second Series, is valuable. On the lost child, see *Thomson*, "Land and Book," vii, 452; on Jesus with the doctors, see *Edersheim*, "Social Life," 119-121, 265, 266; also *Stapfer*, 417, 418. Perhaps the fewer apocryphal stories of Jesus's childhood are in one's mind the better; but if any have intelligent curiosity as to their general character, good specimens can be found in *Longfellow's* "Golden Legend."



LESSON III.—JANUARY 19.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—LUKE 3. 15-22.

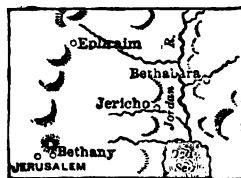
[Read Luke 3. 1-38. Compare also Malachi, chapter 3.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.—John 1. 29.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Jesus was baptized in **January, A. D. 27.** John was imprisoned in **March, A. D. 28.**

PLACES.—1. Jesus was baptized in the **Jordan**, probably near the Bethabara fords, five miles northeast of Jericho. 2. The palace of Herod Antipas was in **Tiberias**, a splendid city built by him on the **Sea of Galilee**. 3. John was imprisoned in **Machærus**, a great structure—fortress, prison, and palace all in one—on the edge of Herod's dominions, nine miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. Its modern name is *Tübertiyeh*.



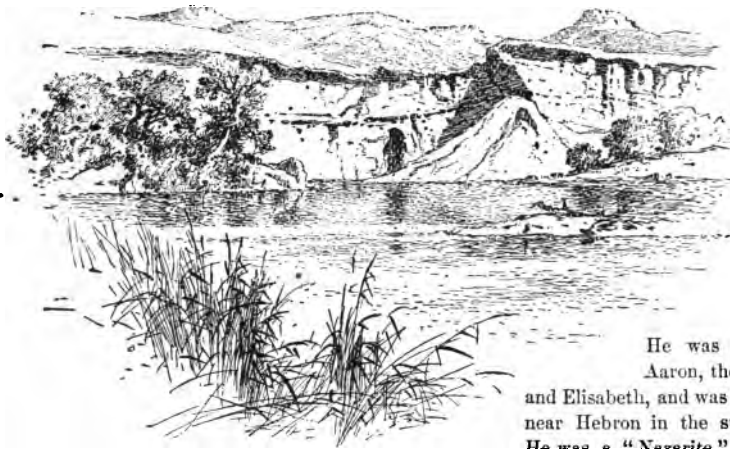
RULERS.—**Pontius Pilate**, Procurator (governor) of Judea. This was his first year. **Herod Antipas**, Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. **Herod Philip** (not, however, the Herod Philip whose wife Herod Antipas had taken), Tetrarch of Bashan. Remember that nearly all the life of Jesus was lived under the civil administration of two men—Antipas in Galilee and Pilate in Jerusalem.

PARALLEL AND ILLUSTRATIVE PASSAGES.—The ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3. 1-12; Mark 1. 1-8; Luke 3. 21, 22). The imprisonment of John the Baptist, here mentioned out of its historic connection (Matt. 4. 12; 14. 3-5; Mark 1. 14, 15; 6. 17, 18). See also John 1. 6-8, 15-34. Also the prophecies of Isaiah (40. 3-5) and Malachi (3. 1; 4. 5, 6).

JESUS was now about thirty years old (Luke 3. 23); he still lived with his mother, as we suppose, at Nazareth.

JOHN THE BAPTIST was six months older than Jesus. Recall Lesson I.

He was a descendant of Aaron, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, and was born probably in or near Hebron in the summer of B. C. 5. He was a "Nazirite" from birth. See Num. 6, and note on page 23. His thirty years of life seem to have been



THE PLACE WHERE JOHN BAPTIZED.

passed in the wilderness. From infancy he was "filled with the Holy Spirit." His character was that of an ascetic; his clothing, camel's hair (probably woven into coarse cloth, such as is worn by the commonest people in the Orient); his food, "locusts and wild honey"—to understand which statement we must remember that even to-day some of the wretched poor of the East roast or boil certain species of locusts, and salt them down for eating. He filled the popular ideal of a prophet. His lifework was to prepare the way for the Messiah.

THE MEANING OF JOHN'S BAPTISM.—"The significance of John's baptism explains the significance of the baptism of Jesus. It was not merely like his submitting to circumcision and the purification (Luke 2. 21, 22), because they were rites required by the law, while baptism was not. It was a public renunciation of sin and a public profession of religion. It is true that Christ himself knew no sin and needed no repentance (John 8. 46; 14. 30); but he was numbered with the transgressors, was made sin for us, and bore our infirmities and carried our transgressions (Isa. 53. 12; 2 Cor. 5. 21). In taking upon him human nature he took all its humiliation and all its duties, though none of its real degradation, and fittingly began his public life by a public renunciation of sin for himself and his followers. Observe, too, that the religion which by this act he professed was that of the spirit, as opposed to the religion of form and ceremonies. His baptism was a public and solemn enunciation of his position as a teacher of personal righteousness, and his indorsement of the fundamental doctrine of which John the Baptist was a herald, but which received its fullest exposition in the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, that they only are the true children of God who, whatever their birth or place in humanity, repent of their personal sins and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. The true follower of Christ must follow him in the public renunciation of sin and profession of religion. It is not true, as is sometimes said, that Christ professed religion only by his life."

LESSON HYMN.—

O Lord, while we confess the worth Of this the outward seal,
Do thou the truths herein set forth To every heart reveal.
Baptized into the Father's name, We'd walk as sons of God;
Baptized in thine, we own thy claim As ransomed by thy blood.
Baptized into the Holy Ghost, We'd keep his temple pure,
And make thy grace our only boast, And by thy strength endure.—*Mary P. Bowly.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (January 13), The Ministry of John the Baptist, Luke 3. 1-14. *Tuesday*, The Ministry of John the Baptist, Luke 3. 15-22. *Wednesday*, A witness bearer, John 1. 6-18. *Thursday*, Sent before, John 8. 22-30. *Friday*, John's submission to Jesus, Matt. 3. 7-17. *Saturday*, Suffering for faithfulness, Mark 6. 14-20. *Sunday*, The preacher and his message, Mark 1. 1-11.

Authorized Version.

15 And as the people were ^ain expectation, and all men ^bmused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, ¹I indeed baptize you with water: but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose

Revised Version.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the

16 Christ; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I,

^a 'r, in *surprise*.—^b Or, *reasoned*, or, *debated*.—¹ Matt. 3. 11.

I. THE BAPTIST. VERSES 15-20.

15. Expectation—They looked for some open declaration from John to the effect that he himself was the Messiah. The stern righteousness of this new leader of the people supported this notion. **Whether he were the Christ**—Better, "whether haply he was himself the Christ." "The Messianic expectations of the day had even reached the Gentiles, many of whom, even in Rome, and in high society, were proselytes to Judaism."—*Cambridge Bible*. But especially were the Jews expectant of the Messiah's advent. Here was the strangest Reformer ever seen or heard—was *he* the Christ?

Illustration 13. John had brought home to the hearts of men the painful consciousness of sin as no one had ever done before. "Jane Taylor, in one of her moral fables, gives an account of the arrival and sojourn on this earth of a former inhabitant of the planet Venus. He was one of a race like ours, apparently in all respects human, except that he had never heard of death. No hint of it came to him until after he had resided several weeks in this world, and had in the meantime been introduced to all the gayeties of society and instructed in the best means of making money; and his emotions at the discovery that all men must die, and the amazement that overcame him at the worldliness of creatures with such a destiny, and their indifference to the future, are vividly portrayed in the story. One can better see by the way it strikes a stranger how appalling is this earthly insensibility and lack of preparation for death. 'The sting of death is sin.'"—*Rev. T. Brown*.

Illustration 14. Repentance. "1. A new mainspring to a watch. 2. A railroad train switching on to a new track. 3. Grafting a tree with new fruit. 4. A ship reversing her course."—*Peloubet*.

16. John answered—A deputation had come from the Sanhedrin to ascertain his claims (John 1. 19-28). Luke represents John as withholding the announcement of the Messiah until the people were ripe for it. No, he was not the Messiah; the Messiah, however, was coming, and greater far than he, for He would do a greater work than he could do. **I indeed baptize you with water**—I indeed induct you as far as I can by a simple ceremony into the kingdom of God. The "I" is emphasized, as also the baptism with water, as contrasted with that which was to follow. "The result of John's baptism, even for those who received it faithfully, did not go beyond the change of character and life implied in 'repentance.' The higher powers of the unseen world were to be manifested afterward."—*Ellicott*. **One mightier than I**—"Mightier to effect what my baptism is powerless to produce"—both to cleanse the penitent and punish the obdurate. **The latchet of whose shoes**—The thong of whose sandals. **I am not worthy to unloose**—This mightier One is so much greater than I that I am unworthy to unfasten his shoes. As one might say nowadays, I am not worthy to be his bootblack. "Among Jews, Greeks, and Romans alike, the office of untying and carrying the shoes of the master of the house, or of a guest, was the well-known function of the lowest slave of the household."—*Ellicott*. John's head was not turned by his popularity; his Lord alone was great.

Authorized Version.

shoes I am not worthy to unloose: ² he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

17 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and ³ will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Revised Version.

the latchet of whose shoes I am not ¹ worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you ¹⁷ ² with the Holy Ghost and *with* fire: whose fan *is* in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

² Joel 2. 28, 29; John 7. 38; 1 Cor. 12, 13.—³ Micah 4. 12; Matt. 13. 30.

1 Gr. *sufficient*.—2 Or, *in*.

Shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost—As I ceremonially cleanse you with the water, he will cleanse your hearts by contact with divine “life, holiness, and wisdom.” Such a baptism came upon the multitude at Pentecost (Acts 2). Such a baptism comes upon every Christian at his conversion (Gal. 3. 2; Rom. 8. 9). **With fire**—Fire is contrasted with water as a more effectual element of purification.

Illustration 15. “Jesus brings the power which produces repentance and the fruits of repentance.

John's preaching is like cutting up the ice in the harbor, blasting it with gunpowder, and thus making a way for the ships—a slow, hard method. Christ's baptism of the Holy Spirit is the warm spring sun, which melts the ice away.”—*Peloubet*.

Illustration 16. While Mr. Moody was holding his great meetings at Baltimore, in the winter of 1878-79, he preached every Sabbath at the penitentiary. There were about one thousand inmates. It is the custom to give to each one who obeys the rules, and has no black marks for a month, a check, which is equivalent to one day off from the sentence. There were usually forty or fifty out of the thousand who would gain their check by good behavior. After Mr. Moody had preached there a few weeks only one out of a thousand failed of gaining their check. The morality had increased from forty to nine hundred and ninety-nine out of one thousand.

17. **Fan**—A tool like a wooden fork, not a fan in our sense. With it the Jewish farmer separated the wheat from the chaff. He threw up the threshed grain against the wind, which carried away the lighter particles of chaff, leaving the grain to fall back upon the earth. So Christ was to winnow out the people, keeping the good, but rejecting the bad. **Floor**—The threshing floor, a large circular hardened surface, spread over with sheaves of corn. These were first trodden by oxen, to loosen the grain from the chaff. *Professor Isaac Hall* compares the threshing floor to the ring of beaten earth prepared for a modern circus exhibition. Into this the cut grain was put, straw and all, and beasts were driven around, drawing a sledge like a Yankee “stoneboat,” the bottom of which was thickly studded with flint stones. When the grain was quite separated it was, of course, removed, and the chaff swept up for kindlings. The metaphor was familiar. See Job 21. 18; Psalm 1. 4; 35. 5; Isa. 17. 13; 29. 5; Hosea 13. 3. **In**



“WHOSE FAN IS IN HIS HAND.”

his hand—Compare “unto the root,” verse 9. The coming Messiah is already to begin work. **Will thoroughly purge his floor**—That is, will thoroughly cleanse it. The chafflike Israel was in that very period visibly removed from the threshing floor. **The wheat**—The repentant and the righteous. **The chaff**—The people who do not bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. **Burn with fire unquenchable**—A vivid and impressive figure representing the

Authorized Version.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 'But Her'od the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for He-ro'di-as his brother Phil'ip's wife, and for all the evils which Her'od had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Je'sus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

Revised Version.

18 With many other exhortations therefore preached he ³ good tidings unto the people;

19 but Her'od the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for He-ro'di-as his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Her'od had

20 done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that, Je'sus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was

⁴ Matt. 14. 3; Mark 6. 17.—⁵ Matt. 3. 13; John 1. 32.

³ Or, the gospel.

righteous and abiding wrath of God upon the obdurate and impenitent (John 8. 36). It will not do, however, to base many details of theological doctrine on this phrase. The words seem simply to symbolize final and utter destruction.

18. Many other things—The versatility seen in verses 10-14 constantly appeared in John's preaching. Like Paul, he became all things to all men that he might by any means save some (1 Cor. 9. 22). He discussed "live issues." His was applied Christianity. This practical, aggressive characteristic of John's teaching finally resulted in his imprisonment and murder.

19. But Herod—Luke pauses a moment to tell what interrupted this preaching. This Herod (Herod Antipas) was the son of Herod the Great. His title "tetrarch" ("ruler of a fourth part") came from the fact that he ruled the fourth part of the Roman province of Syria. He had reigned over Galilee thirty years. Herodias was Herod's own niece (the daughter of his half-brother Aristobulus) and the wife of his brother, Herod Philip I. Her marriage with Herod Antipas was adulterous, and by the Mosaic law doubly incestuous, and it shocked the conscience of all the stricter Jews. The circumstances of the crime aggravated it. Antipas's claim to the "tetrarchy" over which he now ruled had been in the early days vigorously disputed. While in Rome urging his cause before the Senate he became the guest of Herod Philip. He repaid his brother's hospitality by robbing him of his wife and daughter, who were both as wicked as they were beautiful. To make way for Herodias he cast off his own faithful wife, who was the daughter of King Aretas of Petra, and as a consequence plunged his people into war. During the preparation for this war John the Baptist had denounced Herod's crimes, and it was largely for fear of his influence on public opinion that Herod cast him into prison. To be reprov'd at such a time doubtless seemed to be politically dangerous. "From Mark 6. 17-20, and Matt. 15. 3-5, we learn that John had reprov'd Antipas for many crimes, and that Antipas was so convinced of his holiness and justice as habitually to listen to him with pleasure, and, after paying earnest heed to him, was greatly at a loss about him. We learn, further, that he resisted the constant urgency of Herodias to put him to death."—*Farrar*.

20. Added yet this—Luke regards John's arrest, which soon led to his cruel murder, as the climax of crime in Herod Antipas's wicked career. The Jews generally seem to have regarded this as Herod's worst crime. **Shut up John in prison**—In the castle of Machærus, east of the Jordan, away from the eager crowds of hearers.

II. THE BELOVED SON. VERSES 21, 22.

21. When all the people were baptized—When for that day the ceremony was over. **It came to pass**—Luke calls attention to the sequence of events. John's work, though interrupted, led the way to an identification of the Messiah from heaven. Luke significantly connects the Lord's baptism with that of the people. As they entered on a new moral life, so he with his baptism entered on a new official life. **Praying**—Luke alone unveils the heart of Jesus at this important hour. As in his twelfth year, his mind is preoccupied with his Father's business. Luke tells more about the prayers of Jesus than the other evangelists. "See the

Authorized Version.

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, 'Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Revised Version.

22 opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

* Psalm 2. 7; Isa. 42. 1; Matt. 12. 18; 2 Peter 1. 17, 18.



RUINS OF MACHÆRUS, JOHN'S PRISON.

record: After severe labors (5. 16); before the choosing of the apostles (6. 12); before Peter's great confession (9. 18); at his transfiguration (9. 28, 29); for Peter (22. 32); in Gethsemane (22. 41); for his murderers (23. 34); and at the moment of death (23. 46). He also represents the duty and blessing of urgent prayer in two peculiar parables—the importunate friend (11. 5-13), and the unjust judge (18. 2).”—*Farrar*.

JESUS HIMSELF NEEDED PRAYER. It was when he prayed that the heaven was opened; two years later, when he prayed, the great transfiguration occurred; later still, when he prayed in the dark garden of Gethsemane, angels came and comforted him. What Jesus experienced in his life we may experience in ours. When we pray the heavens will open, though not in the same way.

22. The Holy Ghost descended—To permanently equip him for the work (Acts 10. 38; John 1. 28; 3. 34). **In a bodily shape**—Probably the general understanding is correct, the form of a dove hovered over the head of Christ; although the other interpretation—that “like a dove” alludes to the manner of descent and not to the form—may be correct. **Like a dove**—It was not a real dove. *Weiss* thinks the gentleness of descent, as contrasted with a violent seizure, is intended. On another occasion the Spirit descended in a form like that of dividing tongues of fire. “The dove was the symbol of peace, innocence, gentleness, and love. It marked the abatement of the waters after the flood and the return of life and prosperity. This was the visible representation of a great invisible reality; a most captivating symbolism. All along the ages it is the power of His goodness and tenderness and meekness—his love, in short—that has been victorious. He has ‘wooed and won.’”—*Morison*. **A voice came from heaven**—An articulate voice. **Thou art my beloved Son**—Literally, “Thou art my Son, the Beloved.” Not “my servant;” not “the Messiah.” Sonship includes more than either. **As**

a beloved Son he enjoys especial divine favor, and can speak and act with more than Messianic authority. Luke, like Mark, seems to see in this heavenly testimony a revelation to Jesus, while Matthew looks upon it as a revelation to others. The human consciousness of a unique relation to the Father, which he had perhaps begun to feel at twelve years of age, is now divinely confirmed to him. **In thee I am well pleased**—"The Father loveth the Son" (John 3. 35).

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

We read in this chapter **The Story of a Great Revival**. Like all revivals, as in the days of Samuel, of Savonarola, of Wyclif, of Luther, and of Wesley, it began with one man. One soul was set on fire, and that kindled others.

I. Note the **preaching that brought on the revival**.

1. *Earnest preaching*. Here was a man with whole soul in his work; so single-hearted that he cared nothing for the luxuries or even the comforts of life. He lived such a life as gave confidence in his words.

2. *Scriptural preaching* (verses 4-6). John possessed only the Old Testament, but he made better use of it than many preachers who have both Old and New. He took his text from the word, and spoke by its authority.

3. *Practical preaching* (verses 7-14). It dealt with practical subjects, not theoretical; with deeds, not opinions; and it aimed for practical results. It was summed up in one word, "Repent," that is, "Change your purpose in life, and do right."

4. *Evangelical preaching* (verses 15, 16.) John placed Christ in the foreground, and ever pointed to the One greater than himself. He was willing to be forgotten if Christ could be glorified.

5. *Fearless preaching* (verses 17-20). He was like John Knox, "the man who never feared." He boldly rebuked the Pharisees, the leaders of the Church; the Sadducees, the leaders of society; and Herod, the ruler of his land.

II. Note, also, the **results of such a ministry**.

1. *Awakening*. The whole land was stirred, as it had not been since the days of the old prophets (verse 7; Mark 1. 5). People will go to hear a man who is in earnest, even though he stings their conscience; they flock most eagerly to hear him who tells the TRUTH.

2. *Inquiry* (verses 10-15). People began to ask, "What shall we do?" This is one of the evidences of a true revival—the spirit of personal inquiry concerning duty.

3. *Repentance*. Men turned from old sins to a new life under the influence of his words. Repentance is not a feeling of sorrow, however deep; it is the renunciation of sin.

4. *Opposition* (verses 19, 20). Not all are converted who are brought under the influence of a revival. Some are only hardened and made more bitter in their hate. Such was the state of Herod, and also of the Pharisees.

5. *Christ's coming* (verses 21, 22). When the work had reached the highest stage came Jesus, to usher in a new era and a new kingdom. Every revival is a preparation for Christ to come in the person of the Holy Spirit.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

On the scene of John's ministry, see *Thomson*, "Land and Book," i, 366. On the baptism of Christ, "Expositor," iii, 23-40, First Series. John and his baptism, *Farrar*, i, 101-118; *Edersheim*, i, 272-274. The higher meaning of the baptism of Jesus, *Edersheim*, i, 275-287.

BEHOLD	
THE LAMB OF GOD.	
WORK.	WITNESSES.
SALVATION OF INNERS.	VISION AND VOICE.
THE END.	
WHEAT	CHAFF
GARNERED.	BURNED.
REFLECT.	CHOOSE. FOLLOW.

Baptism an expressive rite in the East, *Stapfer*, 197, 198. Old Testament baptizings, *Tuck*, 366-368. Herod and Herodias, *Stapfer*, *Farrar*, *Edersheim*. The Holy Ghost as a dove and as fire, "Expositor," ix, 81-90; *Robertson's* Sermons, First Series, p. 145; also, "John's Rebuke of Herod," *Robertson*, Third Series.



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS III AND IV.

1. The temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4. 1-11; Mark 1. 12, 13; Luke 4. 1-13). 2. John Baptist's testimony before the priests and Levites (John 1. 18-28). 3. Jesus the Lamb of God (John 1. 29-34). 4. The first three disciples (John 1. 40-41). 5. Philip and Nathanael (John 1. 43-51). 6. The first miracle: water made wine (John 2. 1-11). 7. Sojourn in Capernaum (John 2. 12). [These facts take us from the **summer of A. D. 26**, the date of Lesson III, to the **spring of A. D. 27**. Jesus made his first public appearance in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast that year—passover day, **April 11, A. D. 27**. So between verses 12 and 13 of John 2 we have to place an unrecorded journey from Capernaum to Jerusalem.] 8. First cleansing of the temple (John 2. 13-22). 9. Discourse with Nicodemus (John 2. 23-3. 21). 10. Jesus tarried in Judea, and baptized (or rather his disciples baptized) with even greater success than John Baptist (John 3. 22; 4. 1, 2). [This brings us down to **November or December, A. D. 27**.] 11. John's testimony of Christ at Aenon, "near to Salim" (John 3. 23-26). 12. The departure from Judea (Matt. 4. 12; Mark 3. 14; John 4. 1-3). 13. Discourse with the woman of Samaria (John 4. 4-26). 14. The Gospel in Sychar (John 7. 14-32). 15. Imprisonment of John the Baptist and beginning of our Lord's Galilean ministry [about **December, A. D. 27**] (Matt. 4. 12-17; 14. 3-5; Mark 1. 14, 15; 6. 17, 18; Luke 4. 14, 15; 3. 19, 20; John 4. 43-45). 16. The nobleman's son (John 4. 46-54). Our Maps which show the routes that our Lord successively took as a Teacher may be studied to advantage.



LESSON IV.—JANUARY 26.

THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS.—LUKE 4. 14-22.

[Study whole chapter, Luke 4. Read also Isa. 61. 1-3.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—His word was with power.—Luke 4. 32.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Probably very early in A. D. 28. Our Lord was now thirty-one years of age, and he had been in public life about one year.

PLACE.—Nazareth in Galilee, the home of Jesus's childhood and youth.

THE REJECTION OF JESUS BY HIS TOWNSMEN.—"We hold that this rejection at Nazareth (verses 16-30) is in its proper chronological position, and that a similar occurrence, mentioned by Matthew (13. 54-58) and Mark (6. 1-6), took place about nine months later. 1. This early rejection accounts for our Lord's removal from Nazareth to Capernaum, as the center of his activity (Matt. 4. 13). 2. The close of the section (verse 31) indicates that

Capernaum now became for the first time such a center, though he had already been there (verse 23). 3. Two such rejections, closely resembling each other in some features, are not



impossible; while it is difficult to believe that the event recorded by Matthew and Mark took place so early in the history. 4. All notice of followers is omitted. Mark (6. 1) expressly states that his disciples followed him on that occasion; and the attempt to cast him down headlong could not have occurred so late in his ministry without calling forth a demonstration from those followers. If there was but one rejection, Luke, who gives the most detailed account, probably puts it in the proper place."—*Schaff*.

LESSON HYMN.—

O who like thee, so mild, so bright, Thou Son of man, thou Light of light?
 O who like thee did ever go So patient, through a world of woe?
 O who like thee so humbly bore The scorn, the scoffs of men, before?
 So meek, so lowly, yet so high, So glorious in humility?
 O wondrous Lord, my soul would be Still more and more conformed to thee,
 And learn of thee, the lowly One, And like thee, all my journey run.—*A. Cleveland Coxe.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (January 20), Early Ministry of Jesus, Luke 4. 14-22. *Tuesday*, The ministry rejected, Luke 4. 23-32. *Wednesday*, Ministry of mercy, Luke 4. 33-44. *Thursday*, Isaiah's prophecy, Isa. 61. *Friday*, Hindered by unbelief, Mark 6. 1-6. *Saturday*, A Deliverer, Isa. 42. 1-8. *Sunday*, Made free, Rom. 6. 15-23.

Authorized Version.

14 ¹ And Je'sus returned ² in the power of the Spirit into ³ Gal'i-lee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Revised Version.

14 And Je'sus returned in the power of the Spirit into Gal'i-lee: and a fame went out concerning him through all the region

¹ Matt. 4. 12; John 4. 43. — ² Ver. 1. — ³ Acts 10. 37.

I. PROPHECY. VERSES 14-19.

14. Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit—We may never be able to solve the mysteries of the Incarnation; but it is evident that from the hour of his baptism Jesus asserted a divine power over the spiritual and physical world such as he had never claimed before. A



glance at our **CONNECTING LINKS** will show how full of incidents had been the tour from which he now returned. **Went out a fame of him**—Reports of the marvelous words spoken at Jerusalem, Samaria, and other places, and the marvelous deeds done in Cana and Capernaum (verse 23), spread rapidly through all the central districts into Galilee, where his audiences would be mixed in character, pagan and Jewish, and not under the direct personal influence of the priesthood, as were those in Judea. This "fame" was not an unmixed advantage. It precipitated several perplexing problems.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.	15 round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.
16 And he came to 'Naz'a-reth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.	16 And he came to Naz'a-reth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day.
* Matt. 9, 23; 13, 54; Mark 6, 1. —* Acts 13, 14; 17, 2.	

15. He taught—Literally, he *himself* taught; that is, in person he verified the favorable reports which had preceded him. **In their synagogues**—He who would affect the thinking of the Jews must go to the synagogues. "They were the regular places for religious gathering every Sabbath day, and also usually on Mondays and Tuesdays, besides on other special occasions."—*H. D. M. Spence*. **Being glorified of all**—"His miracles, his words touching and eloquent; perhaps, too, a dim memory of marvels which had happened years before at his birth, shed round the new Teacher a halo of glory. It was only when, instead of the Messianic hopes of conquest and power which they cherished, a life of brave self-denial and quiet generosity was preached that the reaction against him set in. The men of Nazareth, with their violent antagonism (verses 23-30), were only, after all, a few months in advance of the rest of the nation in their rejection of the Messiah."—*Spence*.

16. He came to Nazareth—Whether this visit was the same as that related in Matt. 13. 53-58 and Mark 6. 1-6 is uncertain; but probably not. The order of the narrative counts for little, because all of the evangelists vary at times from strict chronological sequence. See note in BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON. **Where he had been brought up**—The boys and girls who had played with him in



BOOKS OF THE LAW.

infancy, the youths who had been his associates, the men who had hired him as carpenter, were all there, and doubtless would have greeted him heartily if he had come back on the old level—but no horny-handed peasant-prophet for them! Some bejeweled priest from Jerusalem would have had the whole town turn out to do him honor; but the Nazarene crowd said, "We all know as much as Jesus does." In his desire to begin his minis-

try among the companions of his earlier years we see: 1. Love of friends; 2. Moral courage, for home is often the hardest place in which to begin to speak for God; 3. A strong consciousness of the divine call. **LESSONS**: 1. Carry Christ's cause first to those whom you know best; 2. Have no shame to be his follower anywhere. **His custom**—None can be excused from the public worship of God since our great Exemplar regarded it as his duty. "Better," says *Dr. Adam Clarke*, "attend the most indifferent minister than stay at home." Probably until this time Jesus had sat as "a silent worshiper in his own town," and had not presumed to teach. **Went into the synagogue**—Very likely some of the older women present remembered how his mother had brought him there a quarter of a century before, a bright-eyed little boy of five; and doubtless most of the congregation recognized him as a regular attendant from the age of thirteen, when the legal life of a Jew began. The word "the" indicates that there was only one synagogue in the village. Before the Captivity there were no synagogues; in Christ's time there were few villages without, at least one. Their whole service was voluntary, and did not to any degree stand instead of the prescribed temple service. A synagogue was not always a separate house. A room would do, provided the seats could be so arranged that the congregation faced Jerusalem. No Jew could satisfactorily worship without turning his face toward the holy house where God dwelt. What was at first

Authorized Version.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet E-sa'ias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 ⁶ The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, be-

⁶ Isa. 11. 2; 61. 1.

Revised Version.

17 bath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him ¹ the book of the prophet I-sa'iah. And he opened the ² book, and found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

¹ Or, a roll.—² Or, roll.

a reverential sentiment (see King Solomon's dedicatory prayer) became at length an inexorable law, like that of the Mohammedans, who, even to this day, turn their faces toward Mecca when they worship. Down the middle of the synagogue was a lattice which separated the sexes. The women were veiled. The congregation squatted on the floor, the richer ones reclining on cushions. In front of them all was a curtain, behind which was a painted wooden box, called an ark, which contained the Holy Scriptures, each book written on a separate roll. A small platform for the reader or preacher was on one side, and near it were the "chief seats" (referred to in Mark 12. 39), for the "rulers" or "elders." There were no recognized "ministers," in our modern use of that term. The officers were more like our trustees and stewards. Priests and Levites had no more privileges in the synagogues than others. **Stood up for to read**—The Scriptures were always read standing. Jesus seems to have "stood up" without being called upon, to indicate his desire to read and to speak.

Illustration 17. "In the recesses of the porches of St. Mark's of Venice knots of men bask all day long in the sun like lizards, and degraded children gamble and fight. Peddlers sell toys and curiosities at the foundation of its pillars. Priest and layman, rich and poor, pass by it alike regardlessly. You may walk from sunrise to sunset and not see any countenances brightened by it. But the opulent beauty of its architecture led *Charles Dickens* to say: 'It is a thing you would shed tears to see; the wildest visions of the "Arabian Nights" are nothing to it; all that I fancied of it is left thousands of miles behind.' There is not a wider difference in taste between the ignorant Venetian and the cultured traveler than there is between the heart that knows not God and he whose soul, like the psalmist's, longs for the sacred sanctuary."—*Ruskin*.

17. There was delivered unto him—Better, "there was further handed to him"—indicating that the first lesson, which was always from the books of Moses, had just been read—probably without comment; then the roll of **Esaias**—Isaiah—in which the second lesson was to be found, was handed to him. **Opened the book**—It was written on a long roll made up of vellum skins, sewed together, and fastened to a long wooden roller at each end. Hebrew is read from right to left, so that the reader, by rapid movements of the fingers, is continually unrolling with his left hand what he rolled up with his right hand. **He found**—This was probably, though not certainly, a regular "lesson" of the day, as fixed as those of the modern Protestant Episcopal Prayer Book; but the lessons now used by the Jews were selected at a later period than this. The text was in Hebrew, a language more really dead to the Jews then than now, and it was the custom for either the reader or an interpreter to turn it sentence by sentence into the Aramaic dialect which was spoken in Galilee. That Jesus translated it himself is probable from the sneer, "How doth this man know letters, having never learned?" **The place where it was written**—Isa. 61. 1, 2.

18. The quotations contained in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses vary from what we have in Isaiah. A partial explanation of this is that, when the evangelist wrote, the copy he would naturally refer to was written in Greek—the version commonly known as the Septuagint—which varies from the Hebrew original in many minor passages. The variations cannot all, however, be thus explained. There seem to be reminiscences of other passages also, and some scholars have suggested that Luke here transcribes not only the actual sentences read, but also a running comment made at the time by our Lord—extracts from his sermon. **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me**—There is a sense in which any Christian who lives up to his privileges may say this of himself. So much has the Gospel done for us. But those who heard our Lord read

Authorized Version.

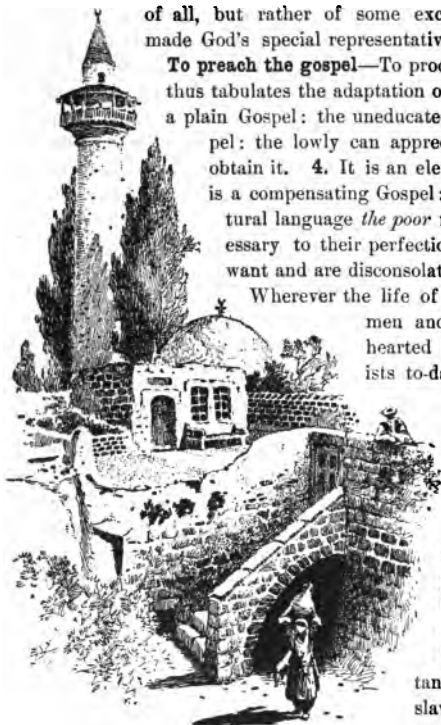
cause he hath ¹anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Revised Version.

² Because he anointed me to preach ⁴ good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,

¹ Psalm 2. 2, 6; Dan. 9. 24; John 1. 41.

² Or, *Wherefore*.—⁴ Or, *the gospel*.



A QUAINT CORNER IN NAZARETH.

this would not think of such high personal experience as being within the reach of all, but rather of some exceptional endowment by which the Speaker was made God's special representative to deliver God's message with God's authority.

To preach the gospel—To proclaim the good news. To the poor—*W. W. Wythe* thus tabulates the adaptation of the Gospel to the wants of the poor: "1. It is a plain Gospel: the uneducated can understand it. 2. It is a sympathetic Gospel: the lowly can appreciate it. 3. It is a free Gospel: the needy may obtain it. 4. It is an elevating Gospel: the humble are raised by it. 5. It is a compensating Gospel: the destitute are requited by it." "In the scriptural language *the poor* represent all who are destitute of whatever is necessary to their perfection and happiness, especially those who feel their want and are disconsolate."—*John Mason*. To heal the broken-hearted—

Wherever the life of Christ has been lived over again by consecrated men and women, there the sorrow-stricken and broken-hearted have been relieved; and in so far as there exists to-day mental anguish unrelieved and unsympathized with, to that degree Christians have failed in the discharge of their duty. We have been converted for no other purpose than to perform the six duties mentioned in this verse and the next. To preach deliverance to the captives

—One of the most singular features of the Mosaic law was the year of jubilee (the fiftieth year), when all slaves were emancipated; when landed property, no matter how burdened with debt, reverted to its original owners; and when the land lay fallow, unsown and uncared for, its spontaneous fruit to be gathered only by the poor, the slave, the stranger, and the cattle. In the nineteen centuries which have passed since our Lord read these words his followers have brought deliverance to many

captives, to inmates of debtors' prisons, to the serfs of Russia, to the slaves of America, to wretches within Christendom who have been chained by evil habits, and to the wide world of heathendom. Our Lord breaks every chain. Recovering of sight to the blind—This is the way the passage is translated in the Septuagint; perhaps it is a reminiscence of Isa. 42. 7. Our version reads, "opening of the prison to the bound." We have not the power to cure blindness, as our Master did; but we can relieve the physically blind in many ways—by tendering to them our kindest sympathy and most delicate courtesy, by erecting asylums for their education and protection, by printing books with raised letters, and by numberless other manifestations of loving ingenuity. We can do much, also, to dissipate what is worse than blindness of the body, blindness of the mind. Where Christians do their duty men are not left to ignorance and to low ideals. Where the Spirit of Christ is, there we should expect the best intellectual progress. Our Lord intends us, further, to cure blindness of the soul—not, as he

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
19 To preach ⁸ the acceptable year of the Lord.	19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
20 And he closed the book, and he gave it	20 And he closed the ⁸ book, and gave it back
⁸ Lev. 25. 8; 9 Cor. 6. 2.	⁸ Or, roll.

did, by direct forgiveness, but by preaching righteousness and faith, and by living consistently. So shall we be able to direct the morally blind to Him who is the Light of the world, and who can "make the blind to see." To set at liberty them that are bruised—This is not in our version of the Bible at all, but something found in the Septuagint of Isa. 58. 6. The text of the Hebrew may differ slightly from what has come down to us.

THE VERY KEYNOTE OF THE WORK OF JESUS was the proclamation of universal deliverance. The land lay in bondage. Physical suffering prevailed everywhere. Poverty was extreme. But the spiritual bondage was not less intense. Even the teachers of the Jewish theology made the letter superior to the spirit. Christ declared himself before the world the universal Liberator. Every word he spoke was a signal of freedom.

19. The acceptable year of the Lord—The allusion of Isaiah was to the year of jubilee, the keeping of which was ordered in Lev. 25. 8-10. See note on verse 18. This year was generally understood to be a type of the great jubilee of the kingdom of God. Dean Alford shows that this prophetic citation had a deeper meaning than might at first appear. "It stands in the middle of the third great division of the Book of Isaiah (chaps. 49 to 66), that, namely, which comprises the prophecies of the person, office, sufferings, triumph, and Church of the Messiah; and thus by implication announces the fulfillment of all that went before in him who then addressed them." In spite of all variations of phraseology it will be observed that the spirit and tone of the passage quoted by Luke and the corresponding passage in our Bible are identical. Dr. Bliss ("American Commentary") makes a beautiful comment here: "Notice," says he, "how the quotation from Isaiah is stopped just before the fearful sentence, and the day of vengeance of our God. John the Baptist would hardly have left those words out."

NO HUMAN SYMPATHY HAS EVER EQUALED THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS. His auditors were politically oppressed; he came to preach deliverance to them. They were broken-hearted because of enforced poverty and disappointed ambitions; he came to heal the broken-hearted. Diseases afflicted the community then to a degree unknown within the bounds of civilization now, and the blind were more common than any other afflicted ones; he came to cure the sick and to restore sight to the blind. One half of the community was in daily peril from threatened starvation; he came to bring good tidings to the poor. The whole nation was suffering like a bastinadoed criminal; he came to set at liberty those that were oppressed—to preach a year of jubilee to all. Even the stolid Nazarenes knew that their poverty and sickness and national degradation were, after all, paltry types and symbols of that more abject degradation which is spiritual; their temporal afflictions were light compared with their spiritual burdens. This Preacher came to preach a spiritual Gospel, also one that should emancipate all men from all their ills and sorrows.

Illustration 18. "They that are whole need no physician, but they that are sick." Christ came to call not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. The hopeless sinners of Christ's time were not the men and women with stains upon their brows. They were those who did not know they were sinners. "A seed which is so satisfied with itself that when dropped into the ground it does not try to seek the light will die; while that seed which says, 'I am nothing as I am, I will cast off this worthless shell of self and seek the light,' and then lifts itself up to the sun, will grow unto perfection."—Lyman Abbott.

II. FULFILLMENT. VERSES 20-22.

20. Closed the book—Rolled it up. This must have profoundly surprised his auditors. The second "lesson" consisted of twenty-one verses according to the time-honored rule of the Jews. Jesus read the first two, then suddenly stopped, closed the book in silence, handed it

Authorized Version.

again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and ¹⁰ wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, ¹¹ Is not this Jo'seph's son ?

Revised Version.

to the attendant, and sat down : and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened

21 on him. And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in 22 your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth : and they said, Is not this Jo'seph's son ?

⁹ Acts 2. 12. — ¹⁰ Psalm 45. 2 ; Matt. 13. 54 ; Mark 6. 2 ; chap. 9. 47. — ¹¹ John 6. 42.

to the custodian of the sacred books, and **sat down**. The chair which stood on the platform was really the pulpit of the rabbi. In the eyes of his townsmen Jesus was only a carpenter. Sitting down in that chair was the public assumption of the functions of the preacher, or teacher, by our Lord. The **minister** was the custodian of the sacred books. **Eyes of all . . . were fastened**—Here was a wonderful sensation for these Nazarenes. They could do nothing but look.

21. Began to say—His sermon was an amplification of this thought, the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy : "I am He who is to bring potent and timely help to the broken-hearted, the poor, the blind, the bruised, and the captives." He probably spoke at length. **This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears**—"Our Lord constantly projected himself in all his utterances. On no less than thirty different occasions did Christ represent the happiness of man as depending on faith in him as a living personality. This must be the theme of his followers."—*R. R. Meredith*.

THOSE WHO READ THE OLD TESTAMENT ARIGHT will find Christ everywhere in its pages. Every part of the Hebrew ritual, almost every incident in sacred history, almost every moral injunction and promise of God's favor, bears upon its wings and preserves for future generations the thought of the coming Christ. And all these prophecies and types were fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth.

22. All bare him witness—How ? Probably in silence, by face and attitude, while the current of "gracious words" swept on ; then in hubbub, by gesture and exclamation, when the Master ceased. They were at once proud of their townsman's eloquence and scornful of his claims, and they were equally frank in their pride and their scorn. **Wondered**—Were astonished. **Gracious words**—Words of grace. His address was of indescribable sweetness and charm. See John 7. 46. **They said**—The synagogue was not a shrine for formal worship, either of the ritualistic or the sermonic order, but rather a place for reverent discussion of scriptural truth—of the law and the prophets—and partook somewhat of the character of a modern Bible class, and somewhat of a more public convention. **Is not this Joseph's son**—Before family names were invented a man was usually distinguished from others bearing the same name by adding another name indicative of his character (as Peter was added to Simon's name) ; by appending the name of his native town (as Jesus of Nazareth, Mary Magdalene) ; or, as here, by adding the father's name. Many of our modern family names were coined in one of these last two ways. The miraculous birth of Jesus may have been unheard of by his townsmen (see Luke 2. 19, 51) ; it certainly was not credited by them. Very quickly the Preacher caught the mind and feeling of his audience. He felt its scornful challenge before a word was uttered, as an experienced public speaker would certainly do. Verses 23-27 tell us how he met that challenge. The congregation rose in turbulence, and, seizing him, dragged him out of the synagogue and hurried him through the little town to one of the precipices close by. "But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way."

IT IS A SINGULAR FACT that the word "grace," which the old heathens used to indicate physical beauty, is the same that the writers of Christendom use to indicate spiritual beauty. We

should be gracious and graceful, kind and loving and beautiful, in our spiritual lives. The divine Preacher is our exemplar in this as well as in his fearless rectitude, for all wondered at the graciousness of the words which proceeded out of his mouth.

Illustration 19. "The gracious words." In Psalms it was declared, "Grace is poured into my lips." "We beheld his glory...full of grace and truth," says John. "Never man spake like this man," said the officers sent to arrest him. The word means here beauty and attractiveness. Says Stalker, "How could He who was the incarnation of love help letting the glow and warmth of the heavenly fire that dwelt in him appear in his words?"

Illustration 20. "As a preacher, I prefer opposition to stagnation," said a famous clergyman. Kites rise against the wind. A headwind is better than none. The worst thing is a dead calm.

Illustration 21. How hard it is to realize that the man we knew in boyhood has come to honor. We often hear a conversation like this: "Do you know Judge S—?" "Know him? I have known him from his boyhood, and it seems unaccountably strange that he could ever have become distinguished." Very few there are like Daniel Webster who say, "I always take off my hat to the urchins of my school, not knowing who among them may become a great man."

Illustration 22. At a small literary gathering at which Thomas Carlyle was present a lady was bewailing the wickedness of the Jews in their treatment of Jesus, and expressed regret that he had not appeared in our own time. "How delighted we should all be to open our doors to him and listen to his divine precepts? Don't you think so, Mr. Carlyle?" He replied, "No, madam, I do not. I think that had he come fashionably dressed, with plenty of money, and preaching doctrines palatable to the higher orders, I might have had the honor of receiving from you a card of invitation, on the back of which would be written, 'To meet our Saviour'; but if he had come denouncing the Pharisees and associating with the lower orders you would have treated him much as the Jews did, and have cried out, 'Take him to Newgate and hang him!'"

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

More than a year has passed since the events of the last lesson. Jesus has been preaching in Judea and has gathered around himself a few choice spirits. He now comes to his own province of Galilee, and, first of all, to his own town of Nazareth. His opening sermon was preached to men who had been his playfellows in childhood, and his fellow-workers in young manhood. **What does Jesus show in his First Sermon?**

I. Insight. Verse 17. To him there were meanings in those old prophecies that those simple toilers and dull rabbins never saw. Christ brought to them an interpretation of Scripture as he afterward gave interpretations of nature, revealing the spiritual.

II. Sympathy. He came to "preach the gospel to the poor." Verse 18. Everywhere he manifested this spirit. See Matt. 5. 3-11; Matt. 11. 28-30. Those who needed him were the very ones whom he sought. His Church should show the same spirit now.

III. Comfort. He came to "heal the broken-hearted." How many have realized the truth of this declaration! There is no comfort for sorrow such as Christ gives; for he enables us to look above earth and beyond the present, to God's abundant recompense of reward.

IV. Liberty. "Deliverance to the captives." Men are slaves under bondage to Satan. Christ comes to break their chains and to set them free. Every sinner is a captive, and every believer is the Lord's free man.

V. Enlightenment. "Recovering of sight to the blind." This he gave literally to many, but his miracles were only illustrations of his greater works on the souls of men. Every sinner is a blind man; and Christ brings to him who believes in him the light of life. The man of the world seeks after riches, crowns, pleasure, because he sees these things. God's people seek higher treasures, for they only can see them.

A MESSAGE OF MERCY.

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD.

HEALING
DELIVERANCE
SIGHT
LIBERTY

FOR

BROKEN-HEARTED.
BLIND.
LIND.
RUINED.

PROCLAIMING

JOY TO ALL THE WORLD.

VI. Salvation. "The acceptable year of the Lord." They were looking for political redemption from the Roman yoke; Jesus brought a salvation infinitely preferable, a deliverance from the guilty consciousness.

This discourse strikes the keynote of Christ's ministry. All that he brought to Nazareth he brings to the world.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

The doctrine of the new Teacher concerning the kingdom of God, *Edersheim*, "Life of Christ," i, 451-459. Synagogues, origin, structure, and outward arrangements, *Edersheim's* "Social Life," 249-264, 265-280; *Stapfer*, 333-346. Synagogue services, *Edersheim*, i, 430-450. Rejected by the Nazarenes, *Farrar*, i, 217-229. The hill of the city, *Thomson*, 129-135; *Stanley*, 357-359, 437-445. The home at Nazareth, *Farrar*, i, 80-103. Christ's invisibility, *Tuck*, 518-520.



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS IV AND V.

1. First rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4. 23-30). 2. Removal to Capernaum (Matt. 4. 13-16; Luke 4. 31). 3. The call of the four (Matt. 4. 18-22; Mark 1. 16-20; Luke 5. 1-11). 4. A day of miracles in Capernaum (Matt. 8. 14-17; Mark 1. 21-34; Luke 4. 31-41). 5. First preaching tour in Galilee (Matt. 4. 23; 8. 1-4; Mark 1. 35-45; Luke 4. 42-44; 5. 12-16).



LESSON V.—FEBRUARY 2.

THE POWER OF JESUS.—LUKE 5. 17-26.

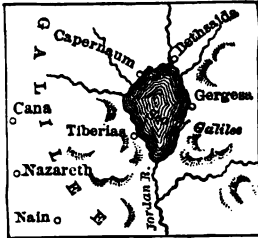
[Read Luke 5. 1-39, and 6. 1-11.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins.—Luke 5. 24.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—The date we are unable to give; probably the spring or early summer of A. D. 28.

PLACE.—Capernaum, described at length on pages 64, 67.



PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 9. 1-8; Mark 2. 1-12.

THE MAIN POINTS IN THIS MIRACLE.—"1. THE TRUE

FAITH OF THE MAN. Our Lord's discerning spirit perceives this, and pardons his sins before he heals his palsy. First soul, then body. So when the wreck made by sin in our entire nature is repaired man will become physically perfect. 2. **THE PERFECT LOGIC OF JESUS.** He places here the miracle, as proof, in close succession to his claim of forgiving power, as the thing to be proved. His miracle demonstrates that he is clothed with the divine power by which he forgives the penitent.

[But see note with ILLUSTRATION following verse 25.] 3. **THE**

INSIGHT OF JESUS. He gave the blaspheming scribes a proof to their inward consciousness that he knew their hearts."—*Whedon*.

LESSON HYMN.—

How can a sinner know His sins on earth forgiven?
How can my gracious Saviour show My name inscribed in heaven?
What we have felt and seen With confidence we tell;
And publish to the sons of men The signs infallible.
Exults our rising soul, Disburdened of her load,
And swells unutterably full Of glory and of God.—*Charles Wesley*.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (January 27), The Power of Jesus, Luke 5. 17-26. *Tuesday*, The Great Physician, Mark 1. 23-34. *Wednesday*, Power to forgive, Luke 7. 36-50. *Thursday*, Forgiveness through Christ, Acts 13. 26-39. *Friday*, Forgiven for his sake, 1 John 2. 1-12. *Saturday*, Plenteous redemption, Psalm 130. *Sunday*, Blessing of forgiveness, Psalm 32.

Authorized Version.

17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: ¹ and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

18 ² And behold, men brought in a bed a

Revised Version.

17 And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was with him

18 ¹ to heal. And behold, men bring on a bed

¹ Acts 4. 30; 19. 11.—² Matt. 9. 2; Mark 2. 3.

¹ Gr. that he should heal. Many ancient authorities read that he should heal them.

I. POWER. VERSES 17-21.

17. On a certain day—Better, “on one of those days.” The avoidance of chronological definiteness is almost certainly intentional, and yet we may plausibly guess that this occurred soon after the healing of the leper, narrated in the preceding five verses. **As he was teaching**—Explaining the doctrines of the kingdom of heaven to those who had already heard his first announcements. He was probably in a private house; very likely the residence of Peter. Among those present were some learned men and many of the common people. **Pharisees**—A class of Jewish separatists who prided themselves on their minute fulfillment of the Mosaic law and all the additional rules devised by the rabbis. They formed a national party. Their aim was to realize faithfulness to oral tradition in ordinary life. Jesus characterized them as a class of hypocrites (Matt. 23; Luke 11. 44). “Fidelity in trifles, gross neglect of essential principles; the mark of godliness without the reality; petty orthodoxy and artificial morals—such was Pharisaism.” **Doctors of the law**—Teachers; these were to be found in all parts of the land, though they were most numerous in Jerusalem. Their work was to expound all the minute distinctions and duties of the law, which wove itself into every detail of life. “These learned men recognized the great force of this new popular movement, with Jesus at its head, and came to determine whether to unite with it and turn it to their own purposes or to take measures against it.”—*Geikie*. **Which were come**—They were not the malicious spies mentioned in Matt. 15. 1; Mark 3. 2; 7. 1. There was as yet no open rupture between Christ and their party, but already there were evident signs of approaching hostility. **Out of every town**—“From all parts.” This is a token of the profound public attention which Jesus had won. **Jerusalem**—The earlier work of Jesus in Judea, of which we learn all we know from John’s gospel, had induced not a few representative men to make the journey into the northern province for purposes of observation and study. **The power of the Lord was present**—The evangelist seems designedly to contrast the official authority of the religious rulers with the unique authority of Jesus. Like him they taught; but the power of the Lord to heal was not with them. It is worth noting that though power ever dwelt in Christ, yet it was not at all times equally manifested. This was an occasion when, in spite of unsympathetic witnesses, the divine influence was especially exercised. **To heal**—To perform miraculous cures. Luke sees a necessity on Jesus’s part for a renewal of his spiritual forces by secret communion with God. See verse 16. The power of Jesus did not fail under the scrutiny of the religious leaders of the nation.

18. And behold—An unexpected turn in affairs. In the midst of this teaching and this great concourse comes a peculiar interruption. **Men**—Four bearers (Mark 2. 3). **Bed**—

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought <i>means</i> to bring him in, and to lay <i>him</i> before him.	a man that was palsied: and they sought to bring him in, and to lay him before him.
19 And when they could not find by what <i>way</i> they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with <i>his</i> couch into the midst before Je'sus.	19 And not finding by what <i>way</i> they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop, and let him down through the tiles with his couch into
20 And ³ when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.	20 the midst before Je'sus. And seeing their faith, he said, Man, thy sins are forgiven
3 Gen. 22. 12; John 2. 25; James 2. 18.	

Not a bedstead; an oriental invalid would be carried on a pallet, rug, or mat, or, perhaps, wrapped in a heavy quilt. In that country there are no beds like ours. **A man which was taken with a palsy**—Smitten with paralysis, or some form of nervous exhaustion. He had lost control of his muscles. He could not walk, perhaps could not even sit up or turn over in his bed. Such diseases are frequently the result of excess, and our Saviour's words made it seem likely that this man's illness was closely connected with his sin. **Sought**—The Greek indicates a perseverance of effort. Mark says they could not get to the outside door, the crowd was so great. **To lay him before him**—They were sure that the prostrate form would appeal to the sympathy of Christ without the mediation of words. "I too am paralytic, since the powers of my soul are without motion or operation toward anything that is good; but if I shall be carried by the four evangelists, and brought by them unto the Lord, then shall I hear him say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.'"—*Theophylact*.

Illustration 23. Men are used as instruments to bring others to Christ. Said Father Taylor, when in his last sickness somebody suggested that the angels were about him, "I don't want angels, I want folks. Folks are better than angels." God might have used angels to cooperate with him, but he chose "folks." How happy you would be for the privilege of presenting your best friend to Queen Victoria! It is your privilege to introduce your friends to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. We don't know very much about Andrew except that he brought Peter to Christ, and that is honor enough for any man.

Illustration 24. A physician once said that he kept himself in health by going to see his patients. Whenever he discontinued this, and required his patients to come to him, or when he tried to abandon his practice, he speedily became lethargic, stupid, and dull; but when he resumed his efforts, and tried and tested his powers, he recovered his strength and vigor. So many a Christian man would find spiritual health and strength in trying to bring others to Jesus.

19. And when they could not find—There is a hint of their disappointment in the Greek negative. **By what way**—Telling the people on the outskirts of the crowd what they wished was not sufficient to open a passageway. They could not persuade the eager throng to let them through. **Went upon the housetop**—This was not hard to do. The dwelling was probably only one story high. Roofs are flat in that country, some having a stairway from bottom to top of the outside wall. Others are built on sloping hillsides, for the purpose of bringing the roof on a level with the road or street above. **Through the tiling**—Opinions differ as to what the friends of this man did. Some think they opened a connecting trapdoor, or removed the awning of the court around which the house was built, or made an opening through the flat housetop, which is here called "tiles." "The making of an aperture in the roof," says *Canon Farrar*, "is an everyday matter in the East." No one who has seen an oriental roof could look upon this temporary disturbance of the roof as a permanent damage to the property. See note on "Houses and Roofs in Palestine" at the end of this lesson. **Before Jesus**—In spite of the throng.

20. He saw their faith—"The impression produced on the spectators would probably have been very different from that produced on Christ. They would have admired the perseverance or the ingenuity or the inventiveness. On none of these qualities did Christ fix as an expla-



nation of the fact. He traced it to the deepest that exists in the mind sus saw their *faith*.' For as being of God, so faith is in the soul of man."—*Robert*—those who bore the paralytic energy and determination to The man himself afterward to that of his bearers in his Christ's command."—*Abbott*. Neither the sick man nor his Christ. Their acts are more most pathetic plaint. But them. **Man**—The Greek In Matt. 9. 2, the words, cheer"—or, better, "Cheer added. **Thy sins are forgiven** *Van Oosterzee* remarks, appears actually to have stood ration of the body; and "the unerring glance looks through the outward and inward condition of the sick man, begins in this way to heal the soul." But Jesus's words were, *Thy sins have been forgiven*; that is, now and henceforth; and they may have been uttered for the instruction of the witnesses rather than for the benefit of the man. Jesus read this man's thoughts as readily as (verse 22) those of others present. His sins, which generally, in the current Jewish view, were thought to be, and in this case may actually have been, the cause of suffering, were the object of his anxiety. In such a serious view of his own misdeeds Jesus sees the true condition of forgiveness. The compassion of Jesus has proven to be as profound as it is prompt. He has no thought of the comments of anyone present. He joyously proclaims release to the captive (Luke 4. 18).

went deeper. He source of power of man—"When Je- love is deepest in the mightiest principle son. "The faith of was shown by their bring him to Jesus. showed trust equal ready obedience to **He said unto him**—companions speak to eloquent than the Christ speaks to word indicates pity. "Son, be of good up, son"—are thee—Here, as *Dr.* trouble of conscience in the way of resto- Saviour, who with

FORGIVENESS OF SINS. Human penitence, in its earlier stages, almost always involves a misapprehension of the attitude and feelings of the injured one. Even a child cowers away from the father whose commands he has broken, and, because of his unloving heart, fancies that the father has ceased to love him. This erratic misconception is especially true when a sinful soul recognizes the wrong he has done to his God. But God's "property is always to have mercy."

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
21 ⁴ And the scribes and the Phar'i-sees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies ? ⁵ Who can forgive sins, but God alone ?	21 thee. And the scribes and the Phar'i-sees began to reason, saying, Who is this that speaketh blasphemies ? Who can forgive
22 But ⁶ when Je'sus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts ?	22 sins, but God alone ? But Je'sus perceiving their reasonings, answered and said unto them, ⁷ What reason ye in your hearts ?
23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Rise up and walk ?	23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise and walk ?
⁴ Matt. 9. 3 ; Mark 2. 6, 7. — ⁵ Psalm 32. 5 ; Isa. 43. 25. — ⁶ Psalm 139. 2 ; Matt. 12. 25 ; Heb. 4. 12, 13.	⁷ Or, Why.

Illustration 25. "Christ first spoke. The man's need was his prayer. *Phillips Brooks* says Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia saying, 'Come over and help us.' When he reached Macedonia he found persecution and rejection and no one to welcome him. Who was this mysterious man ? The need of the people as God sees it, crying, for help. The wants of which we are not conscious appeal to him and cry into his ear."

Illustration 26. "Thy sins be forgiven thee." "Said a young Brahman to a missionary : 'Many things which Christianity contains I find in Hindooism ; but there is one thing which Christianity has and Hindooism has not.' 'What is that ?' the missionary asked. His reply was striking : 'A Saviour.'"—*Presbyterian*.

Illustration 27. "Faith is the hand wherewith we take everlasting life."—*Latimer*.

Illustration 28. It is not faith that saves us, yet faith is necessary to salvation. The connecting link that fastens the steam engine to the cars is not the power that draws the cars. The steam engine draws the train, but the connecting link is necessary. So faith is the connecting link that unites us to Christ, and Christ saves us.

Illustration 29. Said Aristotle, in giving to a worthless, needy person, "I give not to him, but to the human in him." So Christ sought out the sinners.

21. Began to reason—Not in open discussion at first. To Luke it was plain how Jesus could consistently utter such words ; hence the blind groping of those unenlightened scholars he calls "reasoning." Unless they were prepared to admit the irrefragable premises they could not reason their way out. **Who is this**—The inquiry was uttered in a contempt which suggested his want of professional training and his association with a despised town. **Blasphemies**—Forgiveness of sins would seem presumptuous, even for a prophet. **Who can forgive sins, but God alone**—They did not know, because they would not know, that God had given such authority to one in their midst (verse 24). But the principle involved in their question is a sound one.

Illustration 30. Queen Elizabeth gave to her friend the Earl of Essex a jeweled ring, and told him, if he should ever be in any strait or trouble where the queen's word would help, to send her that ring. So much did she love him that she promised even if his offense were the crime of high treason to pardon it if the ring were sent. Years passed and, though no one would have prophesied it, the queen became estranged from the Earl of Essex. The shadows of royal displeasure darkened, and at last she was persuaded by his enemies that he had committed the crime of treason, and she condemned him to be beheaded. She waited in vain, for the ring never came, and the earl was beheaded. But after his death it was discovered that he had sent back the all-powerful ring, but that an enemy had hidden it from the queen. With God's forgiving love there is no enemy in the way save man's own self-will ; and God only waits for the tear of repentance and the look of faith in the precious name of Christ the Saviour to freely command his pardoning power to go forth.

II. GRACE. VERSES 22-26.

22. Perceived their thoughts—Recognized their reasonings. They had not uttered their thoughts, but Christ read them, as he read the inward faith of the palsied man's bearers. They really followed processes of reasoning, although they began them with wrong premises.

23. Whether is easier—"Which of two courses open to me is, according to your reasoning, the preferable one for a person in my position, to tell this man his sins are forgiven, or to cure him by a word and make him prove himself to be cured ? You reason that it is far easier

Authorized Version.

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man ¹hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, ⁸glorifying God.

¹ Isa. 53. 11; Matt. 28. 18; John 17. 2; Acts 5. 31.—⁸ Psalm 34. 8; 50. 23; 103. 1, 3; John 9. 24.

Revised Version.

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath ⁸power on earth to forgive sins (he said unto him that was palsied), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch,

25 and go unto thy house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house,

⁸ Or, authority.

to tell the man he is forgiven. I will at once convince you of your error." One sentence might be spoken as easily as the other; but only he who has the right to forgive sin possesses the power to heal diseases. It may have seemed easier to utter words which could not be put to visible test; a harder and harder thing to utter a miraculous command the failure of which must immediately overthrow all his claims. Really the pardon of the sinner was the greater wonder; but "here," says *Dr. Plumptre*, "as so often elsewhere, our Lord puts himself on the level of those who hear him, and vouchsafes to speak to them according to their own thoughts." To understand both the criticism of the scribes and the logic of our Lord's reply we must remember that it was held throughout the East, and especially by the Israelites in all ages, that suffering was always the immediate consequence of sin. Without this generalization the average Jew could never maintain the justice of God. It is true that centuries before this the Book of Job had been directed against this doctrine; but we must confess that that noble book has no very definite substitute to offer; and thoughtful Jews had never modified their belief except so far as to admit that a man might suffer for his parents' sins as well as for his own. Our Lord distinctly and repeatedly repudiates this universal inference, and few of his teachings startled conservative minds more than this repudiation; but on this occasion ("for argument's sake," as we sometimes say) "he passes over to his opponents' platform, and thus demonstrates his power to forgive: "Suppose," he seems to say, "your Pharisaic way of connecting sin and suffering be correct; then surely he who remits the penalty forgives the sin. The 'penalty' in this case is palsy; I manifestly cure the palsy; therefore, manifestly, I have forgiven the sin." But read carefully the quotation from *F. W. Robertson* with which we close the notes on verse 25.



HE TOOK UP THAT WHEREON HE LAY."

24. May know—John 7. 17. Their reasoning rested upon insufficient knowledge. **The Son of man**—This somewhat mysterious title is the oftenest applied by Jesus to himself. It emphasizes the reality of his relations to the human race. It has been suggested that his disciples avoided its use because it seemed to leave out of view his unique relations to God. **Power**—Stress is laid on this word. He does not make pretense to, but has, power. Compare John 5. 27. **Arise**—Do what is impossible for any paralytic in his own strength. **Take up thy couch**—Show that you have no need of other persons to carry you.

Illustration 31. The Great Mogul of India on his birthday was weighed in turn with silver, gold, and pearls, which were distributed among the people. How much greater the riches of mercy which Christ comes to bring!

25. Took up that whereon he lay—"The proof of his illness became the proof of his cure." *Dr. Farrar* adds: "The labor was no more than that of carrying a rug or a cloak, yet it was this which excited the fury of the Pharisees in Jerusalem (John 5. 9)." **Glorifying God**—Luke alone tells us of the paralytic's gratitude.

Authorized Version.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

Revised Version.

26 glorifying God. And amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

"THE PARALYTIC TYPIFIES the sinner, by his original helplessness (Isa. 40. 30; John 6. 44; 15. 5); faith, by his earnestness to come to Christ in spite of obstacles (Psalm 25. 15; 86. 2, 7); a frequent Christian experience, by the delay he suffers between his repentance and faith and his cure (James 5. 7, 8); and the power of divine grace, in the ability to obey Christ's command received in the very attempt to comply with it (Phil. 4. 13)."

PARDON AND CURE. In our notes on verse 23 we have shown how Jesus proved that the scribes' conclusions were false even if their premises were true. But their premises were not true. No two assumptions are more contrary to the current of Christ's teaching than 1. The ancient false doctrine—that each man's sufferings are the punishment of his sins; and 2. The modern false doctrine—that freedom from sin brings freedom from its consequences. "The forgiveness of Christ did not remove the palsy; that was the result of a separate, distinct act of Christ. It is quite conceivable that it might never have been removed at all, that he might have been forgiven and the palsy suffered to remain. God might have dealt with him as he did in David's case; on his repentance there came to him the declaration of God's pardon; his person was accepted, the moral consequences were removed, but the natural condition remained. 'The Lord hath put away thy sin; nevertheless the child which is born to thee shall die.' Consider, too, that without a miracle they *must* have remained in this man's case. It is so in everyday life. If the intemperate man repents he will receive forgiveness; but will that penitence give him back the steady hand of youth? Or if the suicide, between the moment of draining the poisoned cup and that of death, repent of his deed, will that arrest the operation of the poison? A strong constitution or the physician may possibly save life; but penitence has nothing to do with it. Say that the natural penal consequence of crime is the scaffold; did the pardon given to the dying thief unnailed his hands? did Christ's forgiveness interfere with the natural consequences of his guilt?"—*Robertson*.

Illustration 32. "The best argument for Christianity is to be found in its miracles of grace. What can the worst enemies of Christ say against the drunkards that have been reclaimed, the liars made truthful, the unclean made chaste, the hard and grasping made tender and benevolent, the depraved made refined, the scoffing and profane become praying men and women."—*Pentecost*. Such cases show the Son of man yet hath power on earth to forgive sins.

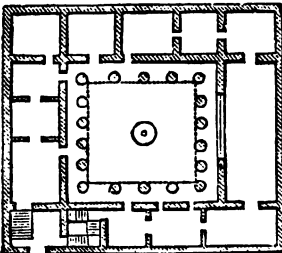
Illustration 33. "One of the smart advertising dodges practiced in Philadelphia is the sending of a well-favored, full-faced, rosy-cheeked, and hearty-looking young man—the very picture of health and embodiment of life—along the principal business streets, all placarded over with announcements of the kind of bread he is fed on. It is a baker's advertisement, and by no means a bad one. So anybody can read the rum-seller's sign on the faces of his customers as they pass along the street. And the tobaccoist has his cards in the very eyes and on the cheeks of young men who buy of him. Every person gives evidence in his walk and conversation, and in the very expression of his countenance, of the nutriment which supplies his head and heart."—*H. C. Trumbull, in Sunday School Times*.

26. Amazed—Astonished at the miracle and the high claim which it proved. **Glorified God**—Their astonishment uttered itself in praise. See Matt. 9. 8. The scribes (doubtless with thorough sincerity) had charged Jesus with blasphemy—that is, derogating from the divine dignity by claiming divine function. And so whenever Christ has been accepted as God manifest in the flesh, and as the One who forgives sins on earth, the worship and glory of God the Father has been increased, not lessened. **Fear**—Reverence and awe. **We have seen strange things**—Literally, "we have seen paradoxes;" miracles wrought and sins remitted. "The spirit of criticism was overcome by the beneficence of the scene—the wonderful cure without cost, medicine, or ceremony; forgiveness of sins with hearty affection. The multitude were in the mood to glorify God in a doxology of joyful praise."—*Hillary A. Gobin*.

HOUSES AND ROOFS IN PALESTINE.—The accompanying sketch represents the interior of a small oriental one-storied house, such as, probably, was the scene of this miracle. In the foreground we notice a courtyard (A, A, A), paved with quadrangular stone flags of various sizes (sometimes arranged in geometrical designs), and inclosed within high walls. About the center of the yard a round perforated stone (H) marks the mouth of the cistern (sometimes there are several such) containing the year's store of rain water, collected during the winter from the roofs and the court itself, which are therefore kept scrupulously clean. It is in this open court that, protected by the high walls from the rude gaze of passers by, many of the domestic duties of the household are performed during fine weather by the ladies of the family and hired women. Here, sitting cross-legged on mats, they sift the corn, pick and grind it, etc.



In the background of the picture is the dwelling itself (B, B, B, B), consisting of apartments built on each side of an open hall, porch, or *leewan* (D), and opening either into it or, like the chamber (J), into the courtyard itself. A veranda (C, C) covered with oriental tiles, or *karamid* (evidently the same as the *keramon* of the Greek of Luke 5. 19), shelters the open space immediately in front of the *leewan* from both sun and rain. In very large houses there are rooms quite surrounding the court, and then the veranda, supported by pillars, runs all around it also, as shown in the diagram below. The upper sketch shows the tiling, which is easily displaced; the single tiles, resembling so many longitudinal sections of a hollow truncated cone, being easily moved, as they lie with their concave sides upward in a layer, above which, and covering the intervals, is another layer with the contrary side upward.



PLAN OF HOUSE IN DAMASCUS,
WITH OPEN CENTRAL COURT.

And now our narrative becomes lifelike. Jesus was in the *leewan*. The yard was crowded, and the bearers of the paralytic, being unable to approach the Saviour, ascended to the flat roof (E, E, E) over the *leewan*, by the staircase (G, G), often, as in the sketch, built on little arches; removed a sufficient number of *karamid*, tore up the lightly nailed laths on which they rested, and having thus literally, as Mark relates, "broken up" the veranda roof, they, as Luke so graphically describes, lowered their burden on his couch, "through the tiling" (the *keramon* or *karamid*), into the midst of the throng "before Jesus." The whole could be done in five minutes.

Our sketch was drawn by the Rev. J. E. Hanauer, of Jerusalem. Carefully study it. It

will make plain other scriptural scenes also; for example, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, whose hairbreadth escape is told in 2 Sam. 17. 18-21, were hidden in just such a cistern as this (H), their feet resting on a stone ledge out of reach of the water. On such a roof as this (E, E) "stalks of flax" (see the story of Rahab, Josh. 2. 6) and fruits are placed to dry, and household linen spread to air; it is a place of retirement also (1 Sam. 9. 26), and occasionally of public proclamation (Matt. 10. 27; Luke 12. 3); it is a place to walk in the cool of the evening (2 Sam. 11. 2), to sleep in hot summer nights (2 Sam. 16. 22), and to pray (Zeph. 1. 5; Acts 10. 9). Around it is a "battlement" or parapet (F), such as was commanded in the Mosaic law to prevent accidents (Deut. 22. 8). The one in the picture is built of earthenware pipes heaped up in regular triangles, with masonry between the heaps. Close to the foot of the staircase (G, G) is the house door (I), and the full sense of Matt. 24. 17, Mark 14. 15, and Luke 17. 31 flashes upon us as we see how a person on the housetop may in time of danger escape without even entering the house.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

THE SICK MAN.		THE SINFUL WORLD.	
NEED—			
GUILTY SOUL.	MORAL RUIN.		
PALSIED BODY.	TEMPORAL SUFFERING.		
EFFORT—			
CARRYING THE SICK.	LABOR AND PRAY	FOR SOULS.	
APPEAL FOR HELP.	PRAY AND LABOR	FOR BODIES.	
REWARD—			
SINS FORGIVEN.	SALVATION	WELL DONE	
SICKNESS CURED.	FOR SINNERS.	WORKERS.	
"DO GOOD AS MUCH AS IN YOU LIES TO THE BODIES AND SOULS OF MEN."			

We see in this story **Some Benefits** through the Coming of Christ.

I. Christ's coming brings hope. Verses 17, 18. Here was a palsied man, helpless, incurable, hopeless. He hears the news, "Jesus has come!" and at once hope springs up in his breast. "There is a chance for me if Jesus is here! I will go to him! Perhaps he can cure me!" So hope rises in every heart when Jesus comes.

II. Christ's coming inspires effort. Verse 18. They told the man that it was impossible to reach the Master. "Nothing

is impossible! Press through the crowd; lift me up the stairs; take off the roof; never mind the trouble or the cost; only lay me at his feet." When a soul possesses such undaunted, overcoming faith as this it is sure of a blessing.

III. Christ's coming brings comfort. Matt. 9. 2. This man had been to many physicians (for one who could and did obtain such service as this would try every means of restoration), but they had shaken their heads and said, "Your case is incurable." Now he lies at the feet of Jesus, and hears him say, "Son, be of good cheer!" Notice how often words of cheer and comfort are found on the lips of Jesus. He is the One to bring gladness to the soul, no matter what sort of sorrow has overwhelmed it.

IV. Christ's coming brings forgiveness. Verses 20-23. "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" This is what men long for most of all, to have the guilty consciousness taken away. Multitudes of people carry within their hearts an uneasy feeling, the knowledge of sins unforgiven. How eagerly would they welcome a Voice with authority to say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" This is what men hear when Jesus comes.

V. Christ's coming brings power. Verses 24, 25. This man came a helpless paralytic; he walked away bearing his bed! What a transformation! Yet there are miracles as great, yea, even greater—profane swearers made reverent, drunkards becoming abstinent, passions subdued, lusts curbed and chastened, by the power that Jesus imparts. His coming makes all things new.

VI. Christ's coming brings praise. Verse 26. "They glorified God." The entrance of Jesus upon earth was heralded by praise from on high and welcomed with praise from believers. His works and his words both awakened praise. No name in all the world has brought such glory to God as the name of Jesus.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

Delitzsch in his "A Day in Capernaum" graphically describes this miracle (p. 54). On forgiving sin before healing, *Andrews*, "Life of Our Lord," 235-239; *Farrar*, "Life of Christ," i, 344-347; *Edersheim*, "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," i, 499-506. Pharisaism, *Expositor*, v, 81-98, First Series; *Edersheim's* "Social Life," 218-226. The Pharisees and Sadducees, *Stapfer*, "Palestine in the Time of Christ," 265-297. Phylacteries, *Edersheim*, i, 95-97, 310-325; ii, 276, 277, 289-291. Philosophy and Preaching of the Pharisees, *Stapfer*, 310-332. Tops of houses, *Tuck*, 263-265; *Thomson's* "Land and Book," i, 48-53; ii, 6-8. Tiling of housetops, *Geikie*, i, 433-434; *Edersheim's* "Social Life," 94-96. Sermons: *Spurgeon*, "Carried by Four," Series 9; *Dwight L. Moody*, "Faith," *F. W. Robertson*, "Absolution," iii, 65.



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS V AND VI.

1. The call of Matthew (Matt. 9. 9-13; Mark 2. 13-17; Luke 5. 27-32). 2. The question about fasting (Matt. 9. 14-17; Mark 2. 18-22; Luke 5. 33-39.) 3. The infirm man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5). 4. The disciples plucking grain (Matt. 12. 1-8; Mark 2. 23-28; Luke 6. 1-5). 5. The man with the withered hand (Matt. 12. 9-14; Mark 3. 1-6; Luke 6. 6-11). 6. The widespread fame of Christ (Matt. 4. 23-25; 12. 15-21; Mark 3. 7-12; Luke 6. 17-19). 7. The choosing of the twelve (Matt. 10. 2-12; Mark 3. 13-19; Luke 6. 12-19). 8. The Sermon on the Mount. It is recorded Luke 6. 20-49, but is given at greater length in Matthew (chaps. 5, 6, 7, to the first verse in chap. 8).



LESSON VI.—FEBRUARY 9.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—LUKE 6. 41-49.

[Read Luke 6. 12-49.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?—Luke 6. 46.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Summer of A. D. 28.

PLACE.—A generally accepted tradition has fixed the hill **Horns of Hattin** as the Mount of Beatitudes. It is about sixty feet in height, and lies to the west of the Sea of Galilee, two miles from the sea and seven miles from Capernaum. One of the great battles of the Crusades was fought here July 5, 1187. Three grades of elevation above the ordinary level distinguish this locality: First, the table-land, stretching down to the sea; second, the broad area on the hilltop; third, the Horns. It is believed that Jesus spent the night on the Horns, inaugurated the apostles upon the lovely hilltops, and met the multitudes on the table-land—the level plain of Luke. The beauty of the surrounding hills, the lake stretching its long mirror to the morning sun, the wavy outline of the distant mountain range, and the magnificence of the eastern sky, combine to lend added charm to an event never to be forgotten.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 7. 3, 16-18, 21-23, 24-27, and Matt. 12. 34, 35.

BIBLICAL SIDE-LIGHTS ON THE LESSON.—Similar inaugurations effected on mountains—Sinai, Gerizim, Ebal, Zion.

LESSON HYMN.—

What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone Around thy steps below !
 What patient love was seen in all Thy life and death of woe !
 Thy foes might hate, despise, revile, Thy friends unfaithful prove ;
 Unwearied in forgiveness still, Thy heart could only love.
 O give us hearts to love like thee, Like thee, O Lord, to grieve
 Far more for others' sins, than all The wrongs that we receive.—*Str Edward Denny.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (February 3), The Sermon on the Mount, Luke 6. 20-26. *Tuesday*, The Sermon on the Mount, Luke 6. 27-38. *Wednesday*, The Sermon on the Mount, Luke 6. 39-49. *Thursday*, Blessing of godliness, Psalm 1. *Friday*, Known by its fruit, Matt. 12. 31-37. *Saturday*, Reaping what is sown, Gal. 6. 1-10. *Sunday*, The rock foundation, 1 Cor. 8. 8-15.

Authorized Version.

41 ¹ And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye ?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the

Revised Version.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not

42 the beam that is in thine own eye ? Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine

¹ Matt. 7. 3 ; Rom. 2. 1, 21, 24.

I. MOTE AND BEAM. VERSES 41, 42.



41. **Why beholdest thou**—Why starest thou at ? **The mote**—Some undeniable moral defect. The word “mote” does not mean floating dust. The obstruction to vision is of the same material in both men—in one case a little chip, in the other a large splinter.

In thy brother's eye—The eye is the man's judging faculty. No doubt there is such a mote. Every man has his failing. Good men ought to note the evil which is in the world in order to apply remedies. The question raised is the clearness of vision and kindness of purpose necessary. **Perceivest not the beam**—To the eye of the candid on-looker the fault-finder is himself characterized by some greater fault than the person whose fault

he is taking such zest in pointing out. Literally it would be impossible for one who had even a small chip of wood in his eye to be unaware of it. But alas ! one may so destroy delicacy of

conscience as to go about with a great fault, obvious to everyone, and yet ignore it and suppose that no one else sees it. Sin is always selfish ; and men lose charity for others' faults almost in direct proportion as their own faults grow.

“**MEN ARE MORE APT** to use spectacles to behold other men's faults than looking-glasses to behold their own.”—*Trapp.*

42. **Either how canst thou say**—How can you be guilty of such ridiculous presumption ? And yet men of the worst stamp have a wonderfully sharp eye for delinquencies on the part of their Christian neighbors, and are loudest in condemnation of inconsistency. What we

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, ² cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.	eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy
43 ³ For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.	43 brother's eye. For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good
44 For ⁴ every tree is known by his own	44 fruit. For each tree is known by its own

² See Prov. 18, 17.—³ Matt. 7, 16, 17.—⁴ Matt. 12, 33.

wish to see we shall think we see. **Thou hypocrite**—He professes to be sorry for the faults which he fastens while chuckling over them with secret and serene satisfaction. It is a false zeal which condemns outside evil and spares that which is in our own hearts and lives. **Cast out first**—"Perhaps when thou hast picked the lumber out of thine own optics thou wilt find the splinter gone from his."—*Whedon*. **To pull out**—"It is the good man's aim not to gaze at his brother's mote, but to assist him to get rid of it. And he does this with *reluctance*, and not satisfaction, with *moderation*, and not exaggeration, and with *love*, not harshness."—*Jamieson*.

Illustration 34. "I have no patience with those who put on magnifying glasses to discover their neighbors' faults. Such folks had better look at home; they might see the devil where they little expected. It would be a far more pleasant business if fault-hunters would turn their dogs to hunt out the good points in other folks; the game would pay better, and nobody would stand with a pitchfork to keep the huntsman off his farm."—*Spurgeon*.

Illustration 35. In the ancient fable a man carried two bags slung over his shoulders. In the one in front he carried his neighbors' faults; in the one behind, out of sight, he carried his own—the exact reverse of the Christian way.

Illustration 36. "When the absent are spoken of some will speak gold of them, some silver, some iron, some lead, and some always speak dirt; for they have a natural attraction for what is evil, and think it shows penetration in them. As a cat watching for mice does not look up though an elephant goes by, so they are so busy mousing for defects that they let great excellences pass them unnoticed. I will not say it is *not Christian* to make beads of others' faults, and tell them over every day; it is *infernal*. If you want to know how the devil feels, you do know if you are such a one."—*Beecher*.

II. FRUIT AND THORNS. VERSES 43-45.

43. For a good tree—The principle of purity and sincerity of life as a necessary qualification to leading others into a right life is illustrated by the tree and its fruit. Call a tree by what name you choose, it will bring forth fruit after its kind. If the bent of a man's soul be toward God and righteousness, though he may not abound in fruit, though some of his fruits be blasted, and though he may sometimes be like a tree in winter, yet he does not bring forth corrupt fruit. **A corrupt tree** may produce green leaves, or be adorned with good fruit artificially attached, but these are not its natural products. Hence the absolute necessity of conversion. It is not a new brain that we need, not new members that we need, not new conditions that we need; it is a new nature. A watch failing to keep time can not be corrected by any jeweling of the case. Painting the organ pipe will not improve the music. Whitewashing the pump will not purify the water. Improving the habits will not purify the soul.

Illustration 37. "A short time ago I called to see one of my hearers who was near death. She was an aged woman, remarkably quiet and unobtrusive, whose life had adorned the Gospel. I took the proffered hand, and said, 'How is it with you?' In a quiet way, yet with considerable earnestness, she replied, 'Well, sir, I am on the rock.'"—*James Smith*.

44. For every tree—"You cannot always distinguish trees by their bark and leaves, nor by the spreading of their boughs. Fruit is the final test. Some estimate of our fellow-men we must form in order to guide our own behavior toward them and to warrant our trust or

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they <i>a</i> grapes.	fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they
45 <i>a</i> Good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for <i>o</i> f the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.	45 grapes. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil <i>man</i> out of the evil <i>treasure</i> bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.
<i>a</i> Gr. <i>a</i> grape.— <i>a</i> Matt. 12. 35.— <i>a</i> Matt. 12. 34.	

distrust. Let us mark what a man does or refuses to do, how he stands with those who know him best, and what is the kind of influence he habitually exerts.”—*Fraser*. In the use of such a test allowance must be made. We do not roughly shake a young fruit tree if it fail to present us in early summer with abundant and luscious fruit. **Thorns . . . figs**—“This imagery is taken from what is a common sight in Palestine; behind rough hedges of thorn and of the prickly pear fig trees are often seen completely covered with the turning tendrils of vine branches.”—*Lange*.

Illustration 38. *Rouland Hill* once heard of a woman who was noted for her sausages. He called upon her and bought a supply. “Now, my good woman,” said he, “how is it that you make such good sausages?” “Why, sir,” said she, “it is a gift from the Almighty.” Mr. Hill shook his head at this and began to repent of his bargain, as well he might, for the article turned out to be stale. He told the story afterward as an instance of how people try to pass off their bad goods by canting talk. This is a great and widespread evil.

Illustration 39. “When the heart is right the hand will be right. The stream may travel a rough course, it may be impeded, discolored, and otherwise vitiated, but these are the accidents of the way, not the defects of the source.”—*Dr. Parker*.

Illustration 40. The Chinese have a wood which, buried some feet underground, fills the air with fragrance. So the qualities of the soul assert themselves through all obstructions, and are felt in the atmosphere of daily life.

Illustration 41.

Judge not: the working of his brain And of his heart thou canst not see.

What looks to thy dim eyes a stain In God's pure light may only be

A scar brought from some well-fought field, Where thou would'st only faint and yield.

—*A. A. Proctor*.

45. Good treasure of his heart—“A most beautiful expression. The heart of a good man is a treasure of good things. Divine truths, spiritual susceptibilities, holy emotions, dwell there richly and abound. Like a wealthy banker, he has only to draw the precious treasure forth whenever occasion demands.”—*Whedon*. The Saviour regards no man as naturally good, but speaks of the sinner who has become good through grace. The heart of both good and evil men are magazines out of which perpetually proceed what therein was in some measure hidden. What is in the well will be in the bucket. **And an evil man**—The depraved man has his treasury of evil. Hostile feelings against truth and goodness, skeptical arguments, purpose to prefer self-interest to right, hatred of God and religion, are all heaped together and ready to furnish of their store when occasion demands. **That which is evil**—No wonder that the streams are noxious when the fountain is full of poison. The words of a bad man correspond with the badness in his heart, and are as swords and poisoned arrows and daggers. **For of the abundance**—“Out of the overflowing abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. When the heart is so fully charged that it can no longer restrain, the mouth will declare the principles and passions by which it is so powerfully actuated.”—*Watson*. Some pretend to good expenses that have not a good treasure; such will soon be bankrupts. Some pretend to have a good treasure within, but give no proof of it; and some have a good treasure, but they are not communicative. The true Christian *is* good and *does* good. In our times the so-called hidden disciples are supposed to be a superior race to the witnessing disciples. A profession of religion is quietly assumed to be a rather vulgar and ancient type of discipleship. Some plead that their religion is altogether a thing between God and their own souls. But if there is

Authorized Version.

46 ¹ And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 ² Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like:

Revised Version.

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to

¹ Mal. 1. 6; Matt. 7. 21; 25. 11; chap. 13. 25.—² Matt. 7. 24.

anything between God and our souls all who know us will soon get wind of it. We are told also of "an unspoken love." In old times, when God's people felt the fire kindle, they spake with their tongues, and in all ages true love to Christ will not fail to find a tongue.

Illustration 42. "Look at that vase of flowers delicately molded from wax, beautiful counterfeits of life; and look at that group of living flowers, fresh, healthy, blooming, by their side. These wax flowers want life. No current flows through their wiry stems. They are fair and shapely, but the mystery of God does not surround them. They are wanting life, and, wanting life, the sun must not kiss them, the tears of night must not fall on them; they have no beauty for the butterfly, no banquet for the bee; they have no heart; they are stiff and cold and rigid; they want life. But the others live. The glad children of the sun, the favorites of the dew, the breeze, the stars, they are the earth's living offering unto God. It is not lip service, nor hand service, nor foot service, that God wants, but consecrated hearts."—*Wonnacott*.

Illustration 43. Mr. Jacob Burkett tells a story of his boyhood which illustrates verse 45. His mother gave him a basket of popcorn to plant. After planting a number of rows under a broiling sun he could not see that the grains had sensibly lessened in number, and the task seemed to be endless. He dug a hole, dumped the remainder into it, and told his mother that he had planted all the corn. She doubted, and said: "Jake, if you have told me a lie that corn will tell on you." The weather was seasonable, and sun and shower soon brought up the corn. She marched him into the field and showed him the thick stocks that had shot up from the hole in which he had done the wholesale planting. The truthful grains had told on him. Not less surely will the principles planted in the heart take on visible expression.

III. SAND AND ROCK. VERSES 46-49.

46. And why call ye me, Lord, Lord—It is evident from this heart-stirring appeal that Jesus had already obtained a large measure of recognition from the people. The question furnishes no ground for declaring the external confession of the Saviour to be needless. On the contrary, our Lord claims this from all his disciples, as in John 13. 13, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." A heartless profession can be no substitute for living obedience; only well-doing will meet with a "well done." "A depressing foresight of the patronizing admiration and barren praise which would be expended on this sermon by men who shall never see the kingdom of God moved Christ to close his discourse with terrible words of warning. The world is tired of the hollow phrases wherein a verbal loyalty is claimed, to which conduct does not set its seal. Profession too often mocks performance."—*Frances E. Willard*. "A fourfold relation to the Lord: There are men who, 1. Neither say, 'Lord, Lord,' nor do his will. 2. Say, indeed, 'Lord, Lord,' but without doing his will. 3. Do his will but without saying, 'Lord, Lord.' 4. Both do his will and say, 'Lord, Lord.'"—*Lange*.

47. Whosoever cometh to me—Indicating the foundation of faith, the receiving Christ by faith as our Prophet, Priest, and King. **Heareth my sayings**—We should therefore acquaint ourselves with what Christ taught. If the word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that heard, how will it profit if we do not hear at all? "Take heed that ye hear." Originality, simplicity, authority, characterize Christ's sayings. We say "perhaps" one hundred times a day. He never said the word "perhaps." All other teachers are only lamps; Christ is a sun, and one sun makes a day in eight planets at the same moment. He did with truth as he did with men. Many a lame truth he made to leap again, many a truth struck with palsy he restored to strength, and many a dead truth he raised from the grave. **And doeth them**—True religion must enter the head, go down through the head to the heart, sink down through the heart to the very feet.

48. And digged deep—"The foundation is the main thing. In Palestine to-day solid builders dig until they reach the rock."—*Robinson*. **The flood arose**—

"This graphic illustration from the sudden floods during the rainy season in Syria would be very familiar. The ground may be parched and the streams dry, and in a few hours the rain pouring down will make a rushing torrent equal in volume

to a river, and only a strongly built house upon a rock foundation can withstand it."—*Rice*. The adherence of the whole heart and mind to the Lord Jesus is the fundamental requisite. This is to base the house upon the rock. There are many critical hours in life that test our character and hope—such as doubt, temptation, and approaching death. Christian character can be so founded and erected as to be steadfast and immovable in death.

49. House upon the earth—

"The foolish hearer who fails to do what the Lord requires, yet because he has heard thinks himself secure, finds his professed Christian character swept away in a sudden flood of evil like the house stuck upon the loose earth which the sudden floods undermine and sweep away into ruins. This is a common sight in Syria. There are many houses thus built that are swept away in an hour, leaving the owners houseless and homeless."—*People's Commentary*. **The ruin of that house—**

"Melancholy as are the desolations made by time and war, leaving broken temples, moldering palaces, and heaps of rubbish, instead of proud and powerful cities, what are they to the ruined houses of vain hope! The ruin of an immortal soul is a thought full of unspeakable sorrow. Jesus closes his discourse, leaving the hearers under the impression of this solemn thought. Each might think that he heard the crash of the falling edifice, and say within himself, 'This disaster will be mine if I prove hypocritical or inconsistent.'"—*Godet*.

Illustration 44. A great engineer who recently died had charge of the erection of a suspension bridge over the Hudson in 1889. Before he began to build the towers he made a most minute inspection of the rocks on which they were to stand. He not only examined them carefully, but sent divers down to see if there were any cavities or washouts under them. Their reports would have satisfied any engineer:



Authorized Version.

48 He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep,⁹ and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

Revised version.

48 whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it:¹ because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.

⁹ Prov. 10. 25; Isa. 28. 16.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *for it had been founded upon the rock*: as in Matt. 7. 26.

but this man was not content. He sent for a diamond drill and took a core out of the rocks a hundred feet long. The work took twelve days, and the result confirmed the previous conclusion, that the rocks were absolutely solid. Then, and not till then, he began to erect the towers. When a man is building his life and work for eternity he should take care that he has a sound foundation, and that he has it in Christ.

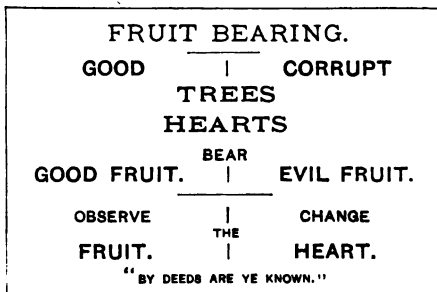
Illustration 45. One hundred and ninety-seven years ago Henry Winstanley completed the first lighthouse on the famous Eddystone Rock in the English Channel. Never wavering in his belief in the stability of his work, he expressed a hope that he might be in it during some terrific storm. Four years after he was there in a fearful gale, and when morning dawned no vestige of the lighthouse was to be seen. The floods had come and the winds had blown, and it had fallen, and great was the fall of it. The next one lasted nearly half a century, and was then destroyed by fire. The third, Smeaton's great design, was finished just one hundred and thirty-seven years ago. Shaped like an oak, it seemed to have an oak's stability, and, after braving so many gales, might seem likely to stand unmoved to the end of time. Yet a new lighthouse was built on another rock close by to supersede Smeaton's. Why is this? It is not the building that is at fault this time, but the bit of reef it stands upon. The rock is undermined by the sea and cannot longer sustain the superstructure. These things are an allegory, and a very striking one. In Scripture we are warned against both dangers, and they should be carefully distinguished: 1. In 1 Cor. 3. 12, 13, Paul speaks of different buildings on the same foundation. "If any man build upon this foundation [Christ] gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: . . . and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." That is, it is possible on the true foundation to raise buildings that shall succumb in the day of trial, like the first two Eddystone lighthouses. 2. But in our passage of to-day Christ points out the other danger—not the danger of an unstable building, but the danger of an unsafe foundation. We are not told that the "foolish man" showed want of skill in his plan, or chose bad materials, or used them carelessly. His house might even have been better designed and better built than the "wise man's." But there was one fatal error, his foundation was useless. He built on the sand. The result was inevitable.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

In these closing sentences of the Sermon on the Mount we find **Five Principles of Character** presented through illustrations.

I. The principle of **impartiality**.

Verses 41, 42. Not impartiality as between one man and another; but that which is infinitely harder, absolute impartiality as between other men and ourselves; measuring ourselves by the same standard that we use when measuring others. Men are apt to be lenient in judging their own faults while strict in judging the faults of others. We can see the speck in another's eye, while we do not see the "beam" in our own.

II. The principle of **clearness of vision**.

Verse 42. *Matthew Arnold* speaks of the Greek poet "who saw life steadily, and saw it whole." So Christ bids us "cast out the beam from the eye," so that we can "see clearly." There is in every man what mathematicians call "the personal equation;" that is, the allowance that must be made for each individual. We should cultivate the power to see clearly, thoroughly, and all around; we should beware of the one-sided half-truth; we should reckon every element in estimating our conclusions.

III. The principle of *sincerity*. Verses 43-45. We reason from the root to the fruit; if one plants a cabbage he does not expect to gather a strawberry. But it is equally sound to reason from the fruit back to the root; if one sees blackberries growing on a bush he does not regard it a cherry tree. We are ever judging of other people's characters by their actions; let us remember that *our* character is being judged by the same evidences. And let us keep the heart clean, sweet, wholesome, so that the deed shall be noble. We must *be*, if we would *seem*.

IV. The principle of *loyalty*. Verse 46. There are plenty of people to confess Christ with the lips in a religious service, yet to disobey him in their daily life. He owns as his disciples not the sayers, but the doers. The Christian is one who confesses Christ as the Master of his life; let him, therefore, do what his Master bids.

V. The principle of *righteousness*. Verses 47-49. There is but one true foundation for character, and that is not expediency, nor policy, nor the opinions of men; it is that which is eternally right. He who builds on righteousness erects a character that shall breast every surge of temptation and shall endure the tests of the judgment day.

HEARING AND DOING.

HEARERS | DOERS

LIKE ONE WHO

BUILD

ON SAND. | ON ROCK.

FOOLISH AND WISE.

"BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD, NOT HEARERS ONLY."

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

Sermons by *Jabez Burns*, "The Two Builders;" *Bishop South*, "False Foundations Removed and New Ones Laid;" *Bishop E. Thomson*, "Christ as a Teacher;" *J. Drummond*, "The Authoritative in Christ's Teaching"

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LESSON VII.—FEBRUARY 16.

THE GREAT HELPER.—LUKE 7. 2-16.

[Read Luke 7. 1-50.]

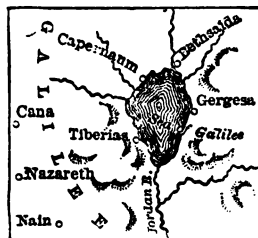
GOLDEN TEXT.—They glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us.—Luke 7. 16.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Summer of A. D. 28, immediately after the Sermon on the Mount. The only Connecting Link between the last lesson and this is Luke 7. 1: "Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum."

PLACES.—1. *Capernaum*, a flourishing town on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. *Dr. W. M. Thomson* and "The Palestine Exploration Society" identify it with the extensive ruins to be seen at Tell Hum. Being the center of the manufacturing district of

Palestine, and lying at the junction of the great roads leading from Syria and the Far East to the Mediterranean on the west and Jerusalem and Egypt on the south, it was a fitting home for the Messiah during two and a half of the years of his public ministry. 2. **Nain**, a village situated on the northwestern edge of "Little Hermon," where the ground falls into the plain of Esdraelon, about twenty-five miles from Capernaum. It is not elsewhere mentioned in Scripture, and was probably visited by our Lord only on this occasion. To-day Nain is a wretched huddle of hovels, and the most conspicuous objects are graves. A cemetery still exists a few minutes' walk from the village to the east, and no doubt the road to it was the scene of the miracle.



PARALLEL PASSAGE.—Matt. 8. 5-13. The two accounts are independent. According to Matthew the centurion comes a petitioner in his own person for the boon which he desires; according to Luke he sends others as mediators between himself and the Lord. A Jewish saying declares, "Every man's proxy is as himself," and in the Scriptures it is customary to make messengers speak as in the words of those who sent them. So James and John speak by their mother (Mark 10. 35; Matt. 20. 20); and Abigail answers the messenger of David as if he were present himself (1 Sam. 25. 40, 41). There is no other account than this of the raising of the widow's son.

LESSON HYMN.—

O for a faith that will not shrink, Though pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink Of any earthly woe!
A faith that shines more bright and clear When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear, In darkness feels no doubt.
Lord, give us such a faith as this, And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste, e'en here, the hallowed bliss Of an eternal home.—*William H. Bathurst.*

HOME READINGS appear at the end of this Lesson, page 71.

Authorised Version.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who ¹ was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

Revised Version.

2 And a certain centurion's ¹ servant, who was ² dear unto him, was sick and at the

¹ 2 Kings 5. 1, etc.; Job 31. 15; Acts 10. 7; Col. 4. 1.

² Gr. *bond servant*.—³ Or, *precious to him*. Or, *honorable to him*.

I. AT CAPERNAUM. VERSES 2-10.



2. **A certain centurion**—Commander of a hundred men in the Roman army; the grade answers to the modern captain. He was probably placed in command of a small detachment from the garrison of Cæsarea to do duty in this important lake town. **Servant**—Literally, bond servant, slave. The life of the Roman slave was absolutely at the disposal of his master. **Dear unto him**—Highly prized because of faithful service. We gather from Matthew that this servant lived in the centurion's house. **Was sick**—Matthew calls the disease paralysis. It was probably a dangerous form of rheumatic fever which attacks the heart, is accompanied by severe pain, and frequently proves fatal.

Authorized Version.

3 And when he heard of Je'sus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, ² beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Je'sus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

² John 4. 47.

Revised Version.

3 point of death. And when he heard concerning Je'sus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would 4 come and save his ³ servant. And they, when they came to Je'sus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou

³ Gr. *bond servant*.

Illustration 46. On the Champs de Mars, in Paris, stands a loftier tower, and crossing the Forth in Scotland stretches a bridge of wider span, than man has heretofore constructed. The one for height, the other for length, stand unequalled. It is remarkable that both of these achievements should have been effected in one and the same year. But in the spiritual world this is a conjunction that may be always looked for. The higher we get in our climbing up toward God the broader is the area of our kindness and good will to our fellow-men.

Illustration 47. King Solomon rode out in state with the Queen of Sheba. Wisest of men, he knew the language of every creature, and as they came to an ant hill which lay in their path he heard the ants say:

"Here comes the king men greet As wise and good and just,
To crush us in the dust Under his heedless feet."

Solomon repeated what the ants said, and the queen replied that they should only be too happy who perished beneath his gracious feet.

"Nay," Solomon replied, "The wise and strong should seek
The welfare of the weak," And turned his horse aside.

—Whittier's "Solomon and the Ants."

Illustration 48. "When Wilberforce was straining every nerve to get his bill for the emancipation of slaves passed a lady said to him, 'Mr. Wilberforce, I'm afraid you are so busy about those slaves that you are neglecting your own soul.' 'True, madam,' he replied, 'I had quite forgotten that I have one.' That remark contains one of the deepest truths of Christianity."—Drummond.

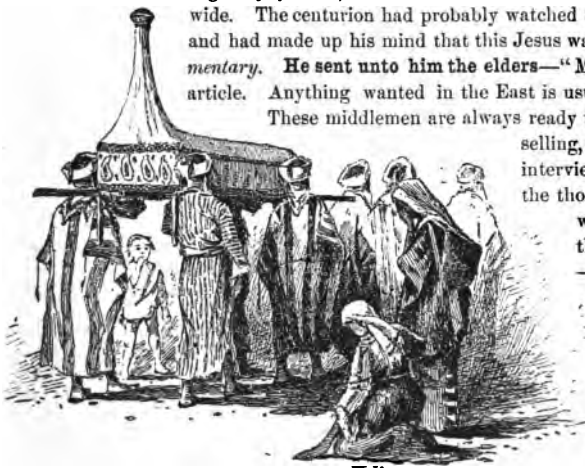
3. When he heard of Jesus—"Better rendered, 'having heard about Jesus.' His fame as a good physician, such as had never arisen before, had now traveled far and wide. The centurion had probably watched the career of the strange Teacher and had made up his mind that this Jesus was no mortal man."—*Pulpit Commentary*. He sent unto him the elders—"More correctly *elders*, without the article. Anything wanted in the East is usually sought through mediators.

These middlemen are always ready to offer their services for buying, selling, making love, getting a physician, interviewing a magistrate, and for any of the thousand petty things in daily life which non-Asiatics would do for themselves."—*Rice*. **Beseeching**

—"The Greek word for beseeching here is a participle agreeing with the centurion. So that even according to Luke's language the words were those of the centurion."—*Wheldon*.

4. Besought him instantly—Earnestly, pressing. They pleaded for the centurion that which

he would never have pleaded for himself. **That he was worthy—**"As, indeed, he was in a sense they perceived not. They did not mean that he deserved the favor, but, being a pious worshiper of the true God, a lover of the nation, and one who had given proof of his liberality



A MODERN ORIENTAL FUNERAL.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
5 For ³ he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.	5 shouldest do this for him: for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our syn-
6 Then Je'sus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; ⁴ for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:	6 agogue. And Je'sus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not ⁴ worthy that thou shouldest
7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but ⁵ say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.	7 come under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but ⁵ say the word, and my ⁶ servant
* 1 Kings 5. 1; Gal. 5. 6; 1 John 3. 14.— ⁴ Prov. 29. 23.— ⁵ Psalm 107. 20.	⁴ Gr. sufficient.— ⁵ Gr. say with a word.— ⁶ Or, boy.

and zeal, he was a fit person to be favorably noticed."—*Watson*. There are several mentions of these Roman military officers in the gospels and Acts, and in every instance the mention is a favorable one.

5. For he loveth our nation—"The Romans were tolerant, from motives of policy, of the religions of the nations they conquered. But this man did more."—*Whedon*. To the religion of the country of his adoption he was no doubt indebted for rest of soul, domestic purity, and sweetness of life. **Hath built us a synagogue**—What better thing could he do? He translated a beautiful creed into a deed whose influence should be widespread and enduring. Modern explorers tell us that among the ruins of Tell Hum are the remains of a white marble synagogue of the time of the Herods. "The walls were 74 feet 9 inches long by 56 feet 9 inches wide and 10 feet thick. The interior was divided into five aisles by four rows of columns."—*Colonel Wilson*. This was probably the noble Roman soldier's gift to Israel. In this building our Lord gave the discourse of John 6. The mutual relations of the centurion and elders are very pleasing: the conqueror esteems the conquered; Jewish leaders intercede for a heathen; a Roman, trained in hatred and contempt for Jews, gives the highest possible proof of his love for the nation by generously caring for their best interests.

Illustration 49. "General Grant had no fear of 'iron hail and leaden rain;' but when Lee surrendered and the Union men began to salute him by firing cannon Grant directed the firing to cease, saying, 'It will wound the feelings of our prisoners, who have become our countrymen again.'"—*Thayer*.

Illustration 50. Two ragged boys, denuded almost of clothing, were standing gazing into a window on the morning of the late Earl Shaftesbury's decease. The one remarked to the other, "Lord Shaftesbury is dead," and his companion responded, "That's not *our* Lord Shaftesbury?" "Yes," replied the other, "it's *our* Lord Shaftesbury." That gentleman had sunk self and associated himself so thoroughly with them that they could not speak of him but as one of themselves.

6. Then Jesus went—In the consciousness of power and the willingness of love. He was as ready to heal the poorest servant as the richest master. **Sent friends**—All the details accord with what we know to be the custom in the East. "Messengers are sent in succession to an important person of whom a favor is desired, making the request in various forms with many expressions of humility. And when it is known that the request will be granted it is customary to send again, urging the great one not to put himself to trouble, and offering apologies and expressions of unworthiness."—*Rice*. This second deputation consisted of intimate friends of the centurion, who could take his place in greeting the highly honored guest. **I am not worthy**—I am not great enough nor of enough importance. The Greek word for "worthy" is not the same as in verses 4 and 7. Here the thought is greatness of rank; in verses 4 and 7 it is weight of character or of reputation. He was a heathen, and so would not claim near approach to the Hebrew rabbi; but more than this was the deep inward feeling of his own personal unworthiness and unfitness for close communion with a holy being. Great faith sees the greatness of its object. The disciples saw power; he saw and felt holiness.

7. Say in a word—The Gentile soldier's faith was really great. He had risen above the

Authorized Version.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9 When Je'sus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Is'ra-el.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Revised Version.

8 shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my ¹servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And when Je'sus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great

10 faith, no, not in Is'ra-el. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the ¹servant whole.

¹ Gr. *bond servant*.

need of an outward sign, such as a touch or the sound of a living voice. He needed no contact with the fringe of the Master's garment, asked for no handkerchief that had touched his person. A word would be enough, and health would gallop back like cavalry at the will of a general. His idea was that as Christ could heal at any distance, he ought to spare himself all unnecessary trouble; but Christ preferred to show his sympathy and thorough devotedness to the cause of salvation in the most evident way.



A ROMAN CENTURION.

8. **A man set under authority**—The force of the centurion's reasoning will be made more apparent by the following paraphrase: "If I, who am under many a superior—the chiliarch of my thousand, the tribunes of my legion, my emperor who commands at Rome—nevertheless receive a ready and willing obedience from my soldiers, how much more Thou, who hast none above thee! When *thou* commandest disease, one of thy ministers, will it not at once obey?" His military training helped him to a faith in the authority and power of Christ. It would seem that he had a clearer conception of the poor Galilean Teacher than anyone else, not excluding the inner circle of the disciples.

9. **He marveled at him**—Was filled with admiration. He admired for our good, that we may imitate the centurion's faith. **Said unto the people**—The words which follow were not spoken to the centurion, nor to his friends, but to the people that were following Jesus. **Not found so great faith**—Great, because he had to ascend from paganism to attain it. It was a faith enabling him to accept all that Jesus should teach, and obey all that he should command. His humility, kindliness, and magnanimity were more conspicuous, but not so noteworthy, as his faith. This was the root of which they were the flowers and fruits. **No, not in Israel**—The entire chosen people of God is now thus signally surpassed in faith in its own Messiah by this poor incoming Gentile. What wonderful faith it must have been to cause Christ to marvel! Once he marveled at unbelief (Mark 6. 6). Shall he marvel at our faith or at our unbelief?

10. **Found the servant whole**—Canon Farrar suggests "convalescent." This healing was effected by a word spoken at a distance from the place where the sick slave was.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Na'in; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.	11 And it came to pass ^{soon} afterwards, that he went to a city called Na'in; and his disciples went with him, and a great multitude. Now when he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, there was carried out one that was dead, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much
12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.	12
13 And when the Lord saw her, ^{he} he had	13 people of the city was with her. And
<small>* Heb. 2. 17; 4. 15.</small>	<small>* Many ancient authorities read, on the next day.</small>

TRUE FAITH IS ALWAYS LINKED WITH HUMILITY. If the seed we plant is to send its shoot upward it must spread its roots downward. So consciousness of our poverty and helplessness and distrust in ourselves will always attend a genuine faith.

THREE ESTIMATES OF THE SAME MAN: What others thought, "He is worthy;" what he thought of himself, "I am not worthy;" what Christ thought, "Not so great faith in Israel."

DISTRESS DRIVES US TO JESUS, and Jesus hastens to the distressed.

ANY CHRISTIAN MAY BE THE CONNECTING LINK between Christ and some loved one in great need. Christian employers especially may learn a holy lesson from this centurion.

Illustration 51. *John Bunyan*, in deciding to go to prison rather than to sin against his conscience, wrote, "The parting with my wife and children was to me as the pulling the flesh from the bones. It brought to my mind the many miseries my poor family was like to meet with, especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all beside. Poor child! thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot endure the wind should blow upon thee. But yet I can venture; you are with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you." Surely such a faith was sublime. And according to our faith it is done unto us.

Illustration 52. Faith builds in the dungeon its sublimest shrine, and up through roofs of stone that shut out the eye of heaven ascends a ladder which angels descend and climb; that ladder is prayer. None are so crippled but they may ascend it.

Illustration 53. When Matthew Prior was servant to King William's ambassador in France, A. D. 1698, he was shown by the French king's household at Versailles scenes from the life of Louis XIV painted by Le Brun, and being asked whether the actions of King William were likewise to be seen in his palace, Prior answered, "No, the monuments of my master are to be seen everywhere but in his own house."

II. AT NAIN. VERSES 11-16.

11. The day after—Revised Version, "soon afterwards." **Into a city called Nain**—Its title in Hebrew means "The-fair" or "The-lovely," probably given because of its situation on a hill. It is approached by a narrow, steep ascent, and on each side of the road are sepulchers. **Much people**—This was the era of Christ's popularity.

12. Nigh to the gate—"Burials were almost invariably without the city walls. Christ's arrival at the moment of the funeral's exit may suggest a foreseen reason for the journey."—*Maclaren*. **Carried out**—The young man was about to be buried in the Jewish manner. The corpse was not laid in a coffin, but simply on an open bier, on which the dead lay wrapped in folds of linen; a napkin was lightly laid over the face. **The only son**—The bitterness of mourning for an only son is frequently referred to in the Bible (Jer. 6. 26; Amos 8. 10; Zech. 12. 10). The procession made a threefold appeal to compassion: a *mother* wept for her son; a *widow* bewailed the loss of her only support and comfort; a *young man* had been taken away in the prime of usefulness. **Much people**—"The miracle is performed in open day, without secrecy, and before many witnesses. No room was left for deception."—*Abbott*.

13. The Lord—When Luke wrote this was probably the usual term by which Christ was known. It occurs over one hundred and twenty times in the gospels, and is specially frequent in Luke. **He had compassion**—Misery appealed to him even when it was silent.

Authorized Version.

compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the ^a bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, ⁷ Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

16 ⁸ And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, ⁹ That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, ¹⁰ That God hath visited his people.

Revised Version.

when the Lord saw her, he had compassion

14 on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came nigh and touched the bier: and the bearers stood still. And he said,

15 Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother.

16 And fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us: and, God hath visited his people.

^a Or, coffin.—⁷ Chap. 8. 54; John 11. 43; Acts 9. 40; Rom. 4. 17.—⁸ Chap. 1. 65.—⁹ Chap. 24. 19; John 4. 19; 6. 14; 9. 17.
—¹⁰ Exod. 4. 31; Psalm 106. 4; chap. 1. 68.

His tender pity flowed unasked toward sorrow and need. The miracle was worked not as a credential of his mission, but because of his divine pity for human suffering. **Weep not**—This is the message of redeeming love. Grief is allayed before miraculous might is displayed. The crowd came to weep; Christ came to arrest their tears.

14. **Touched the bier**—"A sign to the bearers to stop. As Christ was not wholly unknown to them they probably expected help."—*Lange*. **Young man, I say unto thee, Arise**—If this was spoken in Aramaic only two words were required to bring back the spirit from its mysterious habitation to its old earthly tenement.

15. **Sat up, and began to speak**—"As man's voice suffices to reestablish the connection between the soul and the body in anyone who is wrapt in slumber, so the Lord's word has power to restore the interrupted connection in case of the dead."—*Godet*. In no case where the dead were raised does the Bible tell us what they said. **To his mother**—"No doubt with some cheering, comforting words. He who did this shall one day awaken all the dead and deliver all the divided who have fallen asleep in him to their beloved ones for personal recognition and fellowship amid universal gladness."—*Trench*.

16. **Fear . . . glorified**—"A remarkable blending of awe at the display of the divine power and joy at the divine mercy."—*Whedon*. **A great prophet**—Since none but the very greatest of the prophets of the olden time, an Elijah or an Elisha, had brought the dead to life. **God hath visited**—There had arisen in the coasts of Israel no prophet since the far back days of Malachi, four hundred years before the days of our Lord and of his forerunner John.

JESUS WAS ALWAYS BUSY DOING GOOD; his disciples should imitate him. We often allude to the public worship of God as "service." It "serves" us to go to church, but we do not serve God by going. There is only one way to serve God, and that is to serve his fellow-creatures.

TO EVERY ONE SPIRITUALLY DEAD CHRIST CALLS, ARISE! Have we obeyed? The widow's son gave evidence of life by sitting up, speaking, and returning home. Are the evidences of our spiritual life as indisputable?

Illustration 54.

"Prayers of love like raindrops fall, Tears of pity and cooling dew;

And dear to the heart of our Lord are all Who suffer like him in the good they do."—*Whittier*.

Illustration 55. A child in Canada was seen one winter struggling through the snow every day to visit an old sick woman. Though brought up in a wealthy family, her little heart went out in pity to the poor lone, sick woman who was waiting at the edge of the dark river for the angels. Some one embodied her action in a poem, of which here is a stanza:

"Somebody" came to see "Nobody" once—"Nobody's" poor, you know,

And "Nobody's" old, and "Nobody's" sad; So "Somebody" came through the snow.

"Nobody's" days are a little dark, Like autumn days with rain;

When "Somebody" came it was sunshine showers Which glistened and gleamed again.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

These two miracles stand in strong contrast. In the first **The Needy One is the Seeker**; in the second **The Giving One is the Seeker**.

I. **The centurion** shows us rare grace in a strange place—a Gentile, a Roman, and a soldier, yet a man of God. Here is a lily growing in a desert. Notice his religious character. 1. *Reverence* (verses 3-5). Though not a church member, he had built a church, and his spirit shows that he was a worshiper of God. He was a Gentile "seeker after God." 2. *Generosity* (verse 5). He laid his property on God's altar, and gave abundantly toward God's cause. 3. *Humility* (verses 6, 7). A rich man and an army officer, he yet regards himself unworthy to have Jesus beneath his roof. Contrast with this centurion the Pharisee of the same chapter (verses 36-46). 4. *Insight* (verses 7, 8). While Jews were blind this Gentile saw that Jesus was King in the world spiritual. He saw "Him who is invisible." 5. *Faith* (verse 9). Here was the secret spring of his character—his faith, or the relation of his heart to divine powers and eternal interests. He had chosen the heavenly riches, and therefore saw how to use rightly the earthly mammon.

II. The second miracle shows **Christ** as its central figure, and emphasizes certain aspects of his nature. 1. His *knowledge*. It would appear that he was conscious of that death far away at Nain, and timed his visit to the city in order to meet that funeral procession. 2. His *sympathy*. He felt that mother's woe and spoke to her words of compassion. Even so he feels now a sympathy with every suffering soul. 3. His *authority*. As this stranger touched the bier the bearers felt in some strange way that he possessed authority, and submitted to his will. 4. His *power*. He who could call back the soul to that dead body can call our souls out of the death of sin into the life of righteousness.

LIFE TRIUMPHANT.

DEATH
DEFEATED.

THE PEOPLE GLORIFY GOD,

SAVING,

A SYMPATHIZING SAVIOUR | A POWERFUL PROPHET

"IS RISEN UP AMONG US."

"THEREFORE COME BOLDLY UNTO THE THRONE OF GRACE."

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (February 10), Jesus the Great Helper, Luke 7. 1-10. *Tuesday*, Jesus the Great Helper, Luke 7. 11-16. *Wednesday*, Life in Christ, John 11. 14-27. *Thursday*, A pitying helper, John 11. 32-44. *Friday*, Faith in the power of Jesus, Matt. 9. 27-35. *Saturday*, Eternal life, John 10. 22-30. *Sunday*, Spiritual life, Eph. 2. 1-10.



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS VII AND VIII.

1. John the Baptist's last message (Matt. 11. 2-19; Luke 7. 18-35). 2. Anointing of Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7. 36-50). 3. Christ's companions on the second preaching tour (Luke 8. 1-3). 4. Warnings to the scribes and Pharisees: "an eternal sin" (Matt. 12. 22-45; Mark 3. 19-30; Luke 11. 14-36). 5. The true kindred of Christ (Matt. 12. 46-50; Mark 3. 31-35; Luke 8. 19-21). 6. The parables by the sea (Matt. 13. 1-58; Mark 4. 1-34; Luke 8. 4-18). 7. The stilling of the tempest (Matt. 8. 23-27; Mark 4. 35-41; Luke 8. 22-25). 8. The Gadarene demoniacs (Matt. 8. 28-34; Mark 5. 1-20; Luke 8. 26-39).

LESSON VIII.—FEBRUARY 23.

FAITH ENCOURAGED.—LUKE 8. 41, 42, 49-55.

[Read Luke 8. 1-56.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Fear not: believe only.—Luke 8. 50.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—A. D. 28. According to the order in which Mark and Luke tell the story, the daughter of Jairus was raised from death immediately after the return of Jesus from the land of the Gadarenes. Matthew tells it in a different order, but it is evident that chapters 8 and 9 of his gospel are arranged according to topics, and not according to time.

PLACE.—Capernaum; at the house of Matthew the apostle; afterward at the house of Jairus.

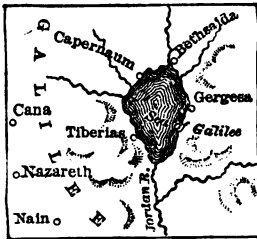
PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 9. 18-26; Mark 5. 21-43.

LESSON HYMN.—

Those bodies that corrupted fell Shall incorrupt arise,
And mortal forms shall spring to life Immortal in the skies.
Behold, what heavenly prophets sung Is now at last fulfilled;
And Death yields up his ancient reign, And, vanquished, quits the field.
Let Faith exalt her joyful voice, And now in triumph sing:
"O Grave, where is thy victory? And where, O Death, thy sting?"—*Wm. Cameron.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (February 17), Faith encouraged, Luke 8. 41-56. *Tuesday*, Great faith, Matt. 15. 21-28. *Wednesday*, Examples of faith, Heb. 11. 1-10. *Thursday*, Faith failing, Matt. 14. 22-33. *Friday*, Weak faith helped, Mark 9. 17-29. *Saturday*, Trust in the Lord, Psalm 62. 1-8. *Sunday*, Come boldly, Heb. 4. 11-16.

HOW TO WEAVE THE THREE STORIES TOGETHER.—"Let us combine the narratives of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. While our Lord was speaking words of promise to the afflicted woman, messengers came from the house of Jairus, reporting that his child was dead. They whispered to him, using the self-same words that had been used by the friend of the centurion, 'Why troublest thou the Teacher any further!' And Jesus turns and speaks words of comfort to the father's heart: 'Be not afraid, only believe.' They come to the house, and he suffers none to enter but the father and mother, and Peter, James, and John, who now for the first time are chosen from among the chosen for the special blessedness of being with him in the greater and more solemn moments of his ministry; and as they enter the preparations for the funeral—always



following in the East a few hours after death—are already begun. Minstrels are there, with a crowd of real or hired mourners raising their wailing cries. And then, in the calmness of conscious power, he bids them withdraw, 'for the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.' To him the death, though real, was yet but as sleep, for he, as afterward in the case of Lazarus (John 11. 11), had come to awaken her even out of that sleep. And then, with the heartlessness and unbelief natural to hireling mourners, they 'laughed him to scorn.' They were too familiar with many forms of death to be mistaken as to its outward signs. He entered, with the five as before, into the chamber of death, where the body was laid out for the burial, and grasped her hands and uttered the words, of which Mark gives the Aramaic form, *Talitha cumi*, 'Damsel, I say to thee, Arise,' and 'immediately she arose and walked.'

Luke again, with a touch of medical precision, reports the fact in another form—"her spirit," or "her breath," returned—and, with Mark, records that our Lord commanded that something should be given her to eat. The restored life was dependent, after the supernatural work had been completed, upon natural laws, and there was the risk of renewed exhaustion. As in other cases, Jesus charged the parents that they should not make it known. It was not good for the spiritual or the bodily life of the girl that she should be the object of the visits of an idle curiosity; and yet, in spite of the command, the fame of the act spread abroad through all that country (Matt. 9. 26)."—*Phumpre*.

Authorized Version.

41 ¹ And behold, there came a man named Ja'i-rus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue; and he fell down at Je'sus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

¹ Matt. 9. 18; Mark 5. 22.

Revised Version.

41 And behold, there came a man named Ja'i-rus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Je'sus' feet, and be-

42 sought him to come into his house; for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the multitudes thronged him.

I. THE FATHER'S PLEA. VERSES 41, 42.

41. He was a ruler—"The synagogue was under the direction, not of clergymen, but of laymen, who also sometimes exercised judicial power. Usually there were ten men connected with each synagogue. Three of these were officers or rulers, one being the chief ruler, the others associated with him."—*Rice*. **Fell down at Jesus' feet**—A synagogue official could hardly have been overfavorable to Jesus. Their attitude was revealed in the query, Have any of the rulers believed on him? But sorrow and need make short work of prejudices. So Jairus forgets his doubts and dignity, and flings himself at the feet of the new Teacher. Though he knew the poverty in which our Lord lived he paid him profound respect as a superior. **Come into his house**—Unlike the centurion, he thought Christ's presence to be necessary.

42. One only daughter—It is noteworthy that he should make a plea for a "daughter." "In the East daughters were and still are regarded as of small importance in the household. This incident shows how Jewish life differed from ordinary Eastern ideas in esteem for girls in a family."—*Rice*. Mark says, "My little daughter." A daughter, till she had completed her twelfth year, was called "little" or "little maid," after that a "young woman." **She lay a dying**—"Mark and Luke speak of her as dying when the father came; Matthew, as already dead. Yet these differences are not hard to adjust; he left her at the last gasp; he knew that she could scarcely be living now; and yet, having no certain notice of her death, he at one moment expressed himself in one language, at the next in another."—*Trench*. **He went**—Though just returned from exhausting toils on the other side of the lake. He asks for no leisure, but goes with the impatient father at once. **The people thronged**—The belief that another miracle was about to be performed attracted a gaping crowd of sightseers.

A TYPE OF THE SINNER. In the Bible death is used as a type of sin; and it is true, often in our own families, that he or she whom we most love lies, in a spiritual sense, "a dying." Every sinner has a mortal disease on his soul, and every sinner is as unable to save himself as this little maiden was, and his friends are as unable to save him. But Jesus is quite as near to us as he was to Jairus, and he is as powerful and as ready to help.

JESUS LOVES TO ANSWER PRAYER. "Note that Jesus was, as he is to-day, ready to answer every appeal. He is more willing to give what we need than we are to ask him. He loves to do us good, to relieve our wants, to save us from danger. We go to no unwilling friend nor empty storehouse when we ask for his blessings. We often dishonor his love and his power by

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
49 ² While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's <i>house</i> , saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.	49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's <i>house</i> , saying, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not
50 But when Je'sus heard <i>it</i> , he answered him, saying, Fear not: ³ believe only, and she shall be made whole.	50 the ¹ Master. But Je'sus hearing it, answered him, Fear not: only believe, and
² Mark 5. 35. — ³ John 11. 25, 40; Rom. 4. 20.	¹ Or, Teacher.

asking so little from his bounty, and asking so feebly. The more we ask, and the more earnestly, the more do we honor the goodness and power of Him who bids us to pray without ceasing, and to open wide our mouths that they may be filled."—*Feloubet*.

Illustration 56. "If we have no trouble we have no manhood. We are like unbaked clay. The potter takes it and makes a vase of the still wet clay; then it is dried and burned stiff; pictures are painted upon it; it is glazed and put through these processes four, five, and six times, and then burnished by the hard steel of the workman until it is beautiful and glowing with the tints put upon it. So God deals with us."—*Beecher*.

Illustration 57. In the early period of the colony a ship departed from one of the New England ports. She never reached her destination. One summer afternoon long after the New England people were standing by the sea when they saw a vessel approach the shore, which they felt sure was the missing ship. It drew nearer and nearer until every line of rigging was visible, and even the faces of those on board. Then suddenly the vision faded, the sails dissolved in cloud, the spars were lost in the mist lines of the sky, the hull disappeared beneath the water, the specter bark was no more. So many of our great hopes melt away into nothingness.

Illustration 58. "A little girl once said to her father, 'Papa, I want you to say something to God for me, something I want to tell him very much. I have such a little voice that I don't think he could hear it away up in heaven; but you have a great big man's voice, and he will be sure to hear you.' The father took the little girl in his arms and told her that, even though God were surrounded by all his holy angels singing to him one of the grandest and sweetest songs of praise ever heard in heaven, he would say to them, 'Hush! Stop the singing for a while. There's a little girl away down on the earth who wants to whisper something in my ear.'"—*Drummond*.

II. ASLEEP IN DEATH. VERSES 49-53.

49. There cometh one—"Mark's language indicates more than one. Probably one was charged with the message, with whom others went along, as it is common for men in their thirst for excitement to have a kind of pleasure in being the bearers of evil tidings."—*Trench*. **Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master**—During the trying delay we do not read of his having uttered any word of impatience, complaint, or reproach, as the sisters at Bethany did. The thought of bringing the dead to life never occurred to the household or hired mourners. Amid all other requests for help it is strange we do not read that any disciple or friend ever asked Christ to restore to life the dead. **Trouble not**—Literally, "tease not," or "worry not."



A RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE.

50. When Jesus heard it—"Mark says, As soon as Jesus had overheard. The emphasis should be placed as soon as; when the tidings came the Lord spake, thus leaving no room for a doubt to insinuate into the father's mind before he had preoccupied him with a word of encouragement."—*Trench*. **Fear not: believe only**—Death need not destroy your hope nor shake your belief. **Be made whole**—Enough to keep alive a spark of hope in the father's darkened heart.

Authorized Version.

51 And when he came into the house, he
 4 suffered no man to go in, save Pe'ter, and
 James, and John, and the father and the
 mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he
 said, Weep not; she is not dead, 5 but sleepeth.

Revised Version.

51 she shall be 3 made whole. And when he
 came to the house, he suffered not any man
 to enter in with him, save Pe'ter, and John,
 and James, and the father of the maiden

52 and her mother. And all were weeping,
 and bewailing her: but he said, Weep not;

* 2 Kings 4. 33, 36; Isa. 42. 2; Acts 9. 40.—3 John 11. 11, 13.

3 Or, saved.

THE GREATER OUR TROUBLE THE GREATER IS OUR NEED OF JESUS, and the greater our need of Jesus the easier it is to get him. He never turned a suppliant aside when on earth, and those who come to him by faith to-day are sure to receive the gift asked for.

Illustration 59. "Let thy gold be cast in the furnace, Thy red gold, precious and bright;
 Do not fear the hungry fire, With its caverns of burning light,
 And thy gold shall return more precious, Free from every spot and stain;
 For gold must be tried by fire, As a heart must be tried by pain."—*Proctor.*

Illustration 60. Jewish tradition relates that after the fall the two angels of God—Judgment and Mercy—were sent forth together to do their office upon the sinning but redeemed race, and together they act to this day. Where one afflicts the other heals. Where one makes a rent the other plants a flower. Where one carves a wrinkle the other kindles a smile. Where one scowls a storm the other spreads a rainbow. Where one poises the glittering sword the other covers our head with gentle wing.

Illustration 61. As we have looked at a shrub or tree nipped by winter or smitten by blight, and wondered whether it were alive or no, seeing here a rotten branch and there a sickly struggling bud, and are uncertain how it will go, so is it sometimes with some of the stateliest, fruitfulest trees in God's garden. Under the stress of storm or calamity we are in doubt as to their withering or blooming again.

Illustration 62. A party of tourists traveling in Norway decided to climb its highest mountain. Finding that crevasses were many, that they should need to be roped together, and that in some places steps would have to be cut with the ice-ax, a first-rate guide, with his assistant, were engaged. Next morning a little boy of ten summers presented himself at the hotel. "Where is the guide for whom we have paid in gold?" The boy could not speak English, and only pointed onward to the mountain. To all wrathful scolding he simply responded by pointing to the distant peak. The party thought themselves cheated, but after a two-mile journey they found the guide with ropes and ice-ax awaiting them at the edge of the ice field. He was not going to spend his strength leading them over common hills. So when great emergencies come we will find the great Helper there.

51. He came into the house—A distinction is made in this verse between coming to the house and "entering in" to the death chamber. The house in general would contain the flute players, hired mourners, curious neighbors, and all the crowd gathered to buzz around sorrow. To these Christ addressed the words, "She is not dead," so as to quiet their fearful noise before he entered the inner room. **Save Peter, and James, and John—**"Peter, who loved him so much; John, whom he loved so much; and James, who should first attest that death could as little as life separate from his love."—*Trench.* "It is hardly to be questioned that this selection was determined by the personal peculiarities of these three, that made them more ready than the others to understand the real meaning of Christ's words and works, and to sympathize with him in his trials and griefs."—*Andrews.*

52. All wept, and bewailed her—By "wept" we are not to understand the shedding of tears, but a wild, heart-breaking wail. The word "bewailed" means that the women were tearing their garments and beating their breasts (Nah. 2. 7). "Mark gives a graphic picture of the tumult and loud cries and wailings. Even the poorest were expected to provide for a funeral two flute players and one wailing woman."—*Cambridge Bible.* Such weeping was professional, such grief conventional and hypocritical. "Jesus's object in admitting only the indispensable witnesses into the room was to diminish as far as possible the fame of the work he was about to perform."—*Godet.* **She is not dead, but sleepeth—**"That he meant this figuratively (compare John 11. 11-14; 1 Cor. 15. 6, 51; 1 Thess. 4. 13) is not to be doubted from verses 49, 52, especially from verse 55, and from the whole spirit of the narrative. It was natural that he should so

Authorized Version.

53 And ^e they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, ^r arise.

55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

Revised Version.

53 for she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. But he, taking her by the hand, called, saying, Maiden, arise. And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately: and he commanded that *something* be given her to eat.

* Job 12. 4; Psalm 22. 7.—† Chap. 7. 14; John 11. 43.

speak here, both because he purposed to restore her immediately to life, and to signify the impropriety of the din and uproar they were making.”—*Bliss*. “To speak of death as a sleep is an image common, I suppose, to all languages and nations. Thereby the reality of the death is not denied, but only the fact implicitly assumed that death will be followed by a resurrection, as sleep is by an awakening.”—*Trench*. “To you this is death, but with me in power and in purpose it is but a sleep from which she is now to be wakened.”—*Whedon*.

53. **They laughed him to scorn**—The thought suggested by his word “sleepeth”—namely, that he was about to deprive them of a profitable job—changed their hired hypocritical mournings to scorn.

III. RESTORED TO LIFE. VERSES 54, 55.

54. **Put them all out**—“That they obeyed confesses Christ’s absolute authority; that the father concurred in the exclusion reveals his faith. The scene depicted is dramatic—the still room; the white form of the dead girl; the group of six with tear-dimmed eyes standing around the loving Master; the Master bending over the dead, a far-off look in his face. One touch of his hand, two words, and her spirit returned.”—*Pulpit Commentary*.

55. **To give her meat**—Showing his loving thought. She had been grievously ill, and now that the old strength and health had come back again the Master felt that she would at once, after her long abstinence, need food. Even the child’s mother was not so motherly as Jesus.

THREE SPIRITUAL LESSONS. 1. Christ’s call and touch bring dead souls to life. He who has power over the body in life and in death alike has power also over the spirit. 2. We must get close to those we would spiritually help. Christ, our Master, with all his divine power, never omitted to express human sympathy. His miracles hardly seemed to be more wonderful than his fellow-feeling for the suffering. He came to every soul in gentleness and quiet. 3. Where spiritual life has been bestowed it must be nourished by appropriate means.

Illustration 63. Sympathy does not come from a far-off standpoint. From the top of the lofty towers of the Brooklyn Bridge one can tell nothing of the size of the waves that dance beneath. The surface of the water appears nearly flat.

Illustration 64. God’s power and love are so great that the largest demands on them are met as easily as the smallest. The ocean bears up the *Great Eastern* as easily as a leaf. The sunshine warms a world as easily as a clod.

Illustration 65. Very terrible is the power of the sunbeam; the rays of light condensed by the lens will burn the hardest substance; yet the light is so softened that, far from wounding, it gives to that most delicate organ, the eye, only exquisite pleasure. It is alarming to think of the weight and force of the atmosphere, and yet by a wonderful system of balancing the pressure of the air becomes nothing more than that of the kiss by which we live. At the close of the year the meteorologist tells us of the millions of tons of rain which have fallen on our fields, but the mighty deluge is so broken into spray that it does little more than sprinkle the satin leaf. “Thy gentleness hath made me great,” is what the giant forest tree may say to the sun, what the flowers rich in sweetness may say to the clouds, what the shell superb in beauty may say to the sea, and what the chastened soul may say to the great Physician.

Illustration 66. “In the Old Testament Jehovah is represented as a destroyer with a plumbline in his hand (Isa. 34. 11). Now, a plumbline is usually employed for the purpose of building up, but God is represented as using it for the work of destruction. In judgment God accomplishes his purpose with extreme discrimination. The blizzard owns the same rule as the zephyr; the storm that scatters is measured as delicately as the sunshine that ripens; one gracious Will fashions the flower and points the thorn. Heaven destroys as it builds, with line and plummet.”—*Watkinson*.

Illustration 67. A lady recently related how she went through a veritable blizzard to view a flower show. With one step she passed out of the wild night, the deep snow, the bitter wind, into a brilliant hall filled with hyacinths, tulips, cyclamens, roses, and orchids. Similar sudden transitions occur in spiritual experience.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

I. Notice that **Jesus was always accessible.** Verse 41. Nobody was ever denied admission to him. You cannot call upon presidents and queens when you please, but you can always go to Christ. As this man came to Jesus, so may we come.

II. Notice that Jesus was **abundant in sympathy.** Verses 41, 42. Most people would rather avoid those who bring to them a tale of sorrow; but Jesus was always ready to listen. Have you any trouble? Tell it to your Saviour.

III. Notice that Jesus was ever **willing to take on himself the burden of others.** Verse 42. He went at once to the ruler's house, forgetting self in helping the suffering. We cannot do all that he could; but we can be like our Lord in willingness of spirit.

IV. Notice that Jesus **allowed this man's faith to be tested.** Verses 43-49. How his heart was tortured as he found Jesus willing to wait and heal the suffering woman, while every moment life was trembling in the scale at his own house! How his hope sank as he heard the words, "Thy daughter is dead!" Jesus let him sink down low only that he might lift him up high. Does he not deal with us in the same manner when answer to our prayer is delayed?

V. Notice that Jesus **strengthened the faith of this man.** Verses 49, 50. He knew just how much weight the bruised reed would bear, and lightened the load at just the right moment.

VI. Notice his **significant words**, "not dead, but sleepeth." Verse 52. In those days men scarcely dared to hope for immortality. Christ gives the hint of an awakening from the sleep of death. We may cherish this hope when we stand above the graves of our friends.

VII. Notice that Jesus would save life, but **would not gratify curiosity.** Verses 51-54. He will do his mighty works only in the presence of those who are in sympathy with himself. People must be in accord with Christ if they would witness his power.

VIII. Notice the **life-giving touch** of Jesus. Verses 54-56. When he touches the soul dead in sin it rises up to newness of life.

ONLY BELIEVE.
FAITH
ENCOURAGED. | REWARDED.
RULER'S RAISED FROM DAUGHTER
DEATH.
"THE MASTER IS HERE AND CALLETH
FOR THEE."
ONLY BELIEVE.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

On the general story, *Andrews*, "Life of Our Lord," 277-283; *Farrar*, "Life of Christ," vol. i, 353-358; *Trench*, "Notes on the Miracles" (New York edition), 139-145. On miracles of raising the dead, *Tuck*, "Handbook of Bible Difficulties," 557-561. On ruler of the synagogue, *Ederheim*, "Life and Times of Jesus," i, 438, 439; *Stapfer*, "Palestine in the Time of Christ," 337, 338; *Ederheim*, "Social Life," 281, 282. This last mentioned book has also a good passage on funeral customs. On Eastern weeping and wailing, *Stapfer*, 167, 168; *Geikie*, "Holy Land, i, 176-541; *Thomson*, "Land and Book," i, 146-148. On spiritual death and life, see *Drummond's* "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," chapter on Biogenesis. Sermons: On "The Healing of Jairus's Daughter," by *Robertson*, in his Second Series; on "Mistakes Respecting a Christian's Departure," by *Whately*; on "The Christian's Death," by *Punshon*. See also "Thoughts upon Death," by *Pascal*, and *Joseph Cook's* lecture on "Does Death End All?"

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS VIII AND IX.

1. The two blind men and the dumb demoniac (Matt. 9. 27-34). 2. Second rejection at Nazareth (Matt. 13. 54-58; Mark 6. 1-6). 3. Third preaching tour continued (Matt. 9. 35; Mark 6. 6). 4. The mission of the Twelve (Matt. 9. 36; 11. 1; Mark 6. 7-13; Luke 9. 1-6). 5. Death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14. 1-12; Mark 6. 14-29; Luke 9. 7-9). 6. The feeding of the five thousand (Matt. 14. 13-23; Mark 6. 30-46; Luke 9. 10-17; John 6. 1-15). 7. Jesus walking on the water (Matt. 14. 24-36; Mark 6. 47-56; John 6. 16-21). 8. Discourse on the Bread of Life (John 6. 22-71). 9. Discourse on eating with unwashed hands (Matt. 15. 1-20; Mark 7. 1-23). 10. Journey toward Tyre and Sidon; the Syrophenician woman's daughter (Matt. 15. 21-28; Mark 7. 24-30). 11. Return through Decapolis; many miracles of healing (Matt. 15. 29-31; Mark 7. 31, 32). 12. The feeding of the four thousand (Matt. 15. 32-38; Mark 8. 1-9). 13. The Pharisees and Sadducees demanding a sign from heaven (Matt. 15. 39-16. 12; Mark 8. 10-21). 14. The blind man near Bethsaida (Mark 8. 22-26).



LESSON IX.—MARCH 1.

JESUS THE MESSIAH.—LUKE 9. 18-27.

(Read Luke 9. 1-50.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.—Luke 9. 35.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—A. D. 29. Late **spring** or **summer**. Jesus was on his way to the Mount of Transfiguration.

AN EPOCH IN THE APOSTOLIC HISTORY.—The confession (verse 16) and the revelation (verse 21) constitute an epoch in the training of the apostles. Despite their little faith and want of understanding they cling to Jesus as the Christ of God. He calls for a confession of this. Peter, the usual spokesman, makes it. Then He reveals his passion and the sufferings of his people with him and for his sake. This revelation was at first rejected.



PLACE.—Somewhere in the vicinity of **Caesarea Philippi**, the modern Banias. It is identical with the Baal-gad of the Old Testament, lies close by one of the sources of the Jordan, and adjoins the southern ridge of Hermon, which rears its majestic head seven thousand feet above the town. Here Herod erected a temple of white marble to Augustus. His son, Philip the tetrarch, enlarged the town and called it after himself (distinguishing it from the other and more important Caesarea of the Acts on the sea-coast) as well as Caesar. It is noted for the ruins of heathen temples in its vicinity, for the beauty of its natural scenery, its castle, which is the most striking fortress in Palestine, and as having been the seat of a Greek and Latin bishopric in succession. It is now a Mohammedan town of twenty huts, but the remains of the ancient city extend for more than half a mile beyond the present hamlet. The ruins which remain have led travelers in many ages to wonder at the grandeur of the Romans in art as much as at their insatiable thirst for conquest and their power in arms.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Peter's confession (Matt. 16. 13-20; Mark 8. 27-30; Luke 9. 18-21). Christ foretells his death and resurrection (Matt. 16. 21-28; Mark 8. 31-9. 1; Luke 9. 22-27).

LESSON HYMN.—

The Saviour! O what endless charms Dwell in that blissful sound!
 Its influence every fear disarms, And spreads delight around.
 Here pardon, life, and joy divine, In rich effusion flow,
 For guilty rebels, lost in sin, And doomed to endless woe.
 The almighty Former of the skies Stoops to our vile abode;
 While angels view with wondering eyes, And hail the incarnate God.—*Anne Steele.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (February 24), Jesus the Messiah, Luke 9. 18-27. *Tuesday*, Testimony from heaven, Luke 9. 28-36. *Wednesday*, Foretold in prophecy, Isa. 53. *Thursday*, John's record, John 1. 19-28. *Friday*, The Spirit's witness, John 1. 29-34. *Saturday*, Christ's own claim, John 4. 19-26. *Sunday*, Not ashamed, 2 Tim. 1. 1-12.

Authorized Version.

18 ¹ And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him; and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

19 They answering said, ² John the Bap'tist; but some say, E-li'as; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

Revised Version.

18 And it came to pass, as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes

19 say that I am? And they answering said, John the Bap'tist; but others say, E-li'jah; and others, that one of the old prophets is

¹ Matt. 16. 13; Mark 8. 27.—² Matt. 14. 2; vera. 7, 8.

I. FAITH. VERSES 18-22.

18. As he was alone—Luke, as we have observed before, frequently notes this habit of our Lord of praying alone, and this instance is recorded by Luke only. **His disciples were with him**—"They had found him praying in solitude, as in Luke 11. 1, while from verse 23 it appears other listeners besides the twelve soon approached, forming a wide circle to which he could address his words."—*Lange*. **He asked them**—"Not to seek information, but to fix right views of himself in their minds."—*Rice*. **Whom say the people**—"Who do the multitudes say?" He wished to know for what the common people took him. Before he will grant to the twelve a deeper view into the nature of his work he will convince himself of their manner of thought respecting his person and character.

Illustration 68. Relation to Christ is vital. Go into your garden in springtime and cut a flower; bring it into the house and put it in a glass of water. It will bloom a while; but an invincible law of nature declares it must die. If you surround it with battalions of soldiers a hundred deep you cannot save it from death. When God made the first flower he laid down a law that a flower severed from its root must die. This is the doom of individuals and churches severed from Christ.

Illustration 69. The importance of Christ's divinity may be thus illustrated: The fact of a book being anonymous need not materially affect its intrinsic worth. If a picture is great and undeniably beautiful it does not matter much who painted it. But if a promise to pay five thousand dollars is put into your hand it matters much whether it has a name at the foot or not. A pauper signing it simply wastes paper and ink, but a Vanderbilt or an Astor can transform a piece of paper into a document of fabulous price. The Gospel promises forgiveness, sanctification, heaven; but if Christ was mere man the name at the foot of the check is not sufficient for such a promise.

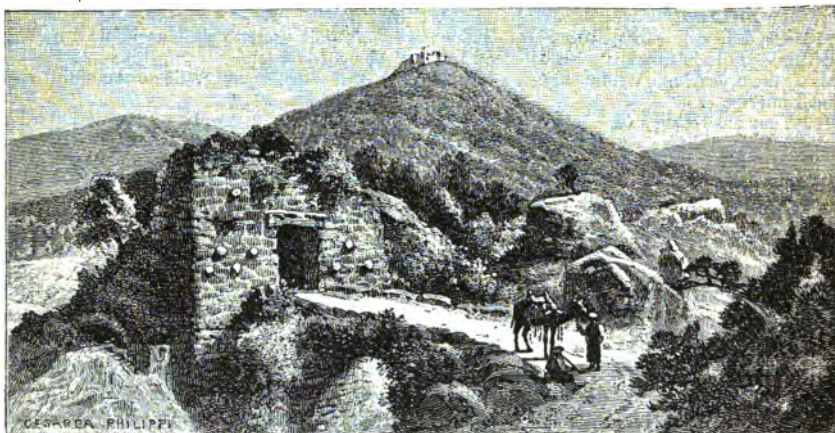
19. John the Baptist—This was an echo of what was talked of at Herod's court (Matt. 14. 1, 2). **Some say, Elias**—Compare Mal. 4. 5. **One of the old prophets**—Men believed, from Micah 5. 5 and other passages, that at the time of the Messiah different prophets would again appear. These popular verdicts show that on the heart of the masses Jesus had made a reverent impression of himself; but if there had formerly existed among the people a disposition to believe in his Messiahship, now there is little talk of this.

Illustration 70. Fault-finders are often blinded by prejudice. A lady excelled in making wax flowers and fruit, but was often criticised severely by her friends. She one day showed them an apple, with which they found fault as to color. When they had finished, the lady cut the apple and ate it.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ³ Pe'ter answering said, The Christ of God.	20 risen again. And he said unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Pe'ter answer-

* Matt. 16, 16; John 6, 69.

20. But whom say ye—The question is addressed to all, and in the original is exceedingly emphatic, “But ye—who say ye?” He would see if they imbibed common notions, or had formed an independent judgment. Christ had never put this question before, but a great crisis had arrived. Hitherto they had been left to observe for themselves; through the sad-colored veil of his humanity they saw the glory of his divinity shine. But the hour had come for a distinct Christian confession. **Peter answering said**—With the utmost prompti-



tude. He did not need to gather in his straggling thoughts and to weigh them over again, one by one, in the balance of deliberation. His tongue was burning to give utterance to the fullness of his heart. He had all the excellences, as well as the faults, of a passionate nature. **The Christ of God**—The Messiah, the anointed King. He was no longer “Master” merely, no longer a wonderful Jewish rabbi, no longer a great prophet only; he was now and henceforth to be the Messiah of God’s people, their spiritual deliverer and King. The complete form of the answer is given in Matt. 16, 16. Study of both accounts makes it clear that the disciples clung to the idea of a temporal reign, and could not yet grasp the conception of a suffering Messiah. Learn that: 1. Confession of Christ is indispensable. 2. The nearer we live to Christ the stronger our faith will become. 3. We have clearer evidence than these disciples had.

CONCERNING THE WORD “CHRIST.” “This word is properly an adjective, and means *Anointed*. It is a translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, the King and spiritual ruler from David’s race, promised under that title in the Old Testament (Psalm 2, 2; Dan. 9, 25, 26). Hence Andrew said to Simon, ‘We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, Christ’ (John 1, 41; compare Acts 4, 27; 10, 38; 19, 28). To us ‘Christ’ has become a proper name, and is therefore written without the definite article; but in the body of the Gospel narratives, since the identity of Jesus with the promised Messiah is still in question with the people, the article is habitually used, and the name should therefore be translated ‘*the Christ*.’”—*M. R. Vincent*.

CHRIST ASKS EACH OF US, as he asked his disciples, “Who say ye that I am?” Each one has his own estimate of Jesus, whether he clearly recognizes it or not, and upon it his

destiny depends. It is not enough to know what others think of Christ. The appeal is personal and cannot be evaded: "Who say ye that I am?" And this question is asked for *our* sake, not for his.

GOD WILL SURELY LEAD HIS SINCERE FOLLOWERS to the fullness of truth. Peter did not yet see the cross. Christ was to him the Conquering One; he had yet to see him as the Suffering One. The idea that the malice of the Jewish rulers against his Master should succeed filled his soul with horror: "Be it far from thee, Lord?" Neither did Peter yet see the glory. He was looking for an earthly kingdom, with Jesus sitting on the throne of David. But the glory of Christ was to be infinitely greater than this. Peter lived to see its beginnings; but not until the Son of man shall come "in the glory of his Father, with his angels," will its fullness be known. But Peter was to "take up his cross," to follow Christ in the path of suffering. Having recognized him as the chosen of God, having confessed him, he could not but follow. The path of suffering leads straight to the glory. And Peter lived to write, "The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow;" "Who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while" (1 Peter 1. 11; 5. 10).

Illustration 71. "The importance of right thoughts about Christ. If you are one of a number of passengers on an ocean steamer, and the cry is sounded that the vessel is sinking, but that a stanch and commodious boat is at your service if you will take to it, everything for your safety depends on what you think of that boat. If you think there is no danger where you are you will not look at the boat as really needed by you. If you recognize your danger, but think that the proffered boat is no more trustworthy than the sinking steamer, you will not look at the boat as worthy of your confidence. Refusing to accept the boat as both essential and sufficient, you will be lost with the sinking vessel because of your opinions about the boat."—*H. Clay Trumbull.*

Illustration 72. If you had worked so long with twelve scholars and could get but a tardy recognition of the truth from only one of the twelve you would be discouraged. But it is the wheat that deserves and repays the husbandman's love and labor. When Plato looked up from his desk in the academy after reading and expounding one of his greatest dialogues he found only one student left in the class room, but that student was Aristotle. What a student! Peter was the only one who made the confession. But how much did Peter represent!

Illustration 73. "As the shining of the stars is a better proof of their existence than the figures of an astronomer; as the testimony of the almanac that summer comes with June is not so convincing as is the coming of summer itself in the sky, in the air, in the fields, on hill and mountain, so the power of Christ upon the human soul is to the soul evidence of his divinity, based upon a living experience, and transcending in conclusiveness any convictions of the intellect alone founded upon a contemplation of mere ideas, however just and sound. If Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God in the experience of those who trust and love him there needs no further argument of his divinity."—*Beecher.*

Illustration 74. "If you go to the photographer's shop and ask the artist to let you look through the lens covered by that little piece of black cloth, and if you look at the chair on which you have to sit for your portrait, it is reversed, the very opposite of what you expected it to be. So some men look at other men. They see them reversed. Precisely that kind of lens many bring to the New Testament when they would look at Christ."—*Cuff.*

Illustration 75. In the town of Barnsley, England, there was a great revival. A talented man, a lecturer on atheism, when approached by a Christian friend, said, contemptuously, "Christ is not worth a thought!" But the next evening he went to Henry Thorne, the evangelist, and said, "I have received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour." The following Sunday evening, in the presence of a large audience, he testified tearfully and tenderly, "Last week I did not believe there was a God, but now I know that the Lord Jesus Christ has pardoned my sins."

Illustration 76. In Paris a reception was given by some of the nobility to certain artists, and Gustave Doré was one of the favored ones. As he stepped from his carriage to the palace door he discovered, to his chagrin, that he had left behind his ticket of admission. He determined to depend on the intelligence of the man at the entrance. Stepping up to him he said, "I am Gustave Doré, the artist, but unfortunately I have left my card of invitation at home. Let me pass, it is all right." Said the man, "I have had positive instructions to let no one pass without a card." Doré immediately took from his pocket one of his visiting cards, and on the back, with his fountain pen, made an irresistibly amusing sketch of himself and the doorkeeper, and, handing it to the man, said, "There is my card." The doorkeeper saw at once that none but Doré could have done that, and admitted him. No one but Christ could have done Christ's deeds.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
21 ⁴ And he straitly charged them, and commanded <i>them</i> to tell no man that thing;	21 ing said, The Christ of God. But he charged them, and commanded <i>them</i> to tell
22 Saying, ⁵ The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.	22 this to no man; saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised
23 ⁶ And he said to <i>them</i> all, If any <i>man</i> will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.	23 up. And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.
24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.	24 low me. For whosoever would save his ¹ life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his ¹ life for my sake, the same shall save
^a Matt. 16. 20. — ^b Matt. 16. 21; 17. 22. — ^c Matt. 10. 28; 16. 24; Mark 8. 34; chap. 14. 27.	¹ Or, soul.

21. To tell no man that thing—Why? 1. "At this juncture none but himself could properly preach the Messiahship."—*Whedon*. 2. "He knew that the people were not yet sufficiently prepared to understand what it was that the Christ should do."—*Morison*. 3. "Lest the Galilean enthusiasts should endeavor to make him a king."—*Cambridge Bible*. 4. Because he foresaw that their faith would falter later, and with tender consideration he wished to spare them the reproach of their enemies, which would be all the more severe the more boldly they had previously declared him to be the Christ.

22. The Son of man must suffer—This was his first announcement of this fact. **Many things**—Too many to enumerate, too painful to speak of in detail. **Elders and chief priests and scribes**—This was the popular way of describing the great council of the Jewish nation, the Sanhedrin, which was composed of these three influential classes. **Be slain, and be raised**—This was his reply to their confession of faith. It said in effect, "You are right in your conception of me and my work. But my reign must be introduced by suffering. I shall only enter my grand Messianic kingdom through the gates of death. But be of good cheer; I shall rise again." He thus intermingled with the doleful the delightful.

II. FAITHFULNESS. VERSES 23-27.

23. To them all—The sermon of which we have the outline in these five verses was evidently preached to the masses. **If any man will**—That is, *wishes* to. **Come after me**—Jesus was going to his kingdom. **Let him deny himself**—"Self is Christ's chief and most cherished rival in every heart; and devotion to self, instead of to Christ, is the very soul and essence of men's sins. Hence self-denial is the first step toward true discipleship."—*Curry*. **Take up his cross daily**—Be ready to endure the most painful and ignominious death in following Christ. "The cross was no unknown image to the Jews who listened. The gloomy procession of robbers and of rebels against Rome, each condemned one bearing to the place of death the cross on which he was to suffer, was a sadly familiar image then in that unhappy land."—*Pulpit Commentary*. **Follow me**—As a suffering servant of a suffering Lord. "The cross is always laid on the animal, and not on the spiritual. No man takes his cross up on his conscience; no man takes his cross up on his faith or hope; no man puts his cross on love. It is on pride; it is on selfishness; it is on the lower force-giving faculties or animal appetites that the cross is put, in order that the higher faculties may predominate and the lower ones serve."—*Beecher*.

24. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it—The contrast is not between body and soul, but between earthly life and true heavenly life here and hereafter. The Greek word rendered "life" signifies the natural animal life, of which the main interests are centered in earth. We may gain the pleasures of time and lose the bliss of eternity. The men who imagine that they make much of life just as they gain that which will minister to their own enjoy-

Authorized Version.

25 ¹For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

26 ²For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

Revised Version.

25 it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own

26 self? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and the glory of the Father, and

¹ Matt. 16. 26; Mark 8. 36; Acts 1. 25.—² Matt. 10. 33; Mark 8. 38; 2 Tim. 2. 12.

ment, and keep that which if parted with would benefit other people, clearly lose life. What is the fate of a grasping worldly mind? It shrivels the soul and renders its victim a castaway in the sea of existence. "Whoever makes the lower life the supreme motive shall lose the higher life; and whoever, making Christ supreme, shall lose even life for his sake, shall find it in the highest, truest sense. The contrast throughout the passage is not between body and soul, but between earthly life in all forms and true heavenly life here and hereafter. Life worldly, selfish, fleshly, is opposed to life eternal, Christian, and spiritual."—Curry. **Lose his life for my sake**—Losses incurred for Christ and his cause will yield unspeakable gain.

Illustration 77. Tell the story of Telemachus, a monk of the fifth century, whose noble self-sacrifice put a stop to the brutal sports of the Roman Coliseum. He had lived for years an ascetic in a cave near a ruined sun-temple, and determined to make a pilgrimage to Rome. Going with the crowds to the arena, he saw two gladiators in the death grapple. It was a nominal Christian crowd which watched with delight the brutal struggle which must end in death for one and probably for both. The sight so wrought upon Telemachus that, regardless of the outcries of the spectators, he sprang between the competitors and parted them. He was stoned to death, but the Roman Honorius, hearing the story, put a stop to all such exhibitions.

25. Gain the whole world—"Jesus supposes the act of saving one's own life accomplished with the most complete success, amounting to a gain of the whole world. But in this very moment the master of this magnificent domain finds himself condemned to perish. What gain to draw in a lottery a gallery of pictures and at the same time to become blind?"—Godet. **Lose himself**—The life, the soul itself, is supposed to be lost to its possessor. An effort is made to buy it back; but where is the equivalent? **Cast away**—Into outer darkness. The loss is eternal. This is the verse that was the spring of the lifelong devotion and remarkable consecration of the great Roman Catholic missionary, Francis Xavier.

Illustration 78. "True it is," said Bishop Hooper, the night before he suffered martyrdom, "that life is sweet and death is bitter, but eternal death is more bitter, and eternal life is more sweet."

Illustration 79. Cardinal Mazarin, when told by his physician that he could live only two months longer, was filled with despair. He left his room and dragged himself along his magnificent picture gallery, sobbing as he went, "Must I quit all these?" Addressing an attendant he said, "Look at the Correggio! This Venus of Titian! That matchless Deluge of Carracci! Ah, my friend, I must quit them all! Farewell, dear pictures, that I have loved so dearly, and that have cost me so much. O, my poor soul! What will become of thee? Whither wilt thou go?"

Illustration 80. "How much is that estate worth?" said one friend to another as they passed a beautiful mansion and extensive and highly cultivated grounds. "I do not know how much it is worth," was the reply; "but I know what it cost its owner." "How much?" "His soul," was the startling reply; and then he proceeded to narrate how exclusively the owner had lived for one object—to build himself a home on earth, utterly careless of the home on high, and had died impenitent and suddenly. No Christian should thus sit in judgment on another; but let us each beware lest we, for the sake of inferior gains, lose our souls.

26. Ashamed of me—The cross, the trials, the loss of life itself, are awful tests of fidelity. No wonder some would stagger in the face of such a fiery pathway. But to waver is to be "ashamed." **Of him shall the Son of man be ashamed**—A punishment in the world to come. The selfish, ease-loving soul who preferred to have his portion in this life will be justly disowned by the Judge. **When he shall come in his own glory**—In the poor rejected Rabbi

Authorized Version.

27 ⁹ But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

Revised Version.

27 of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

⁹ Matt. 16. 28; Mark 9. 1.

now before them, going to his bitter suffering and death, were they looking really on the awful form of the almighty Judge of quick and dead? The glory of the Father and the glory of the Son are, after all, one.

27. Some standing here—Prefacing an altogether different “coming” from that in the last verse. **Taste of death**—An oriental figure by which death was depicted as a bitter cup pressed to the lips. Natural death is evidently referred to. **See the kingdom of God**—Matthew has, “the Son of man coming in his kingdom;” Mark, “the kingdom of God come with power.” “The coming in this kingdom was at the resurrection; the coming of the kingdom of God with power was the consequent miraculous establishment of Christianity upon the earth. The latest surviving apostles saw both of these before their death.”—*Whedon*.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

WHAT THINK YE	
OF	
CHRIST?	
PEOPLE'S	PETER'S
THOUGHT.	
JOHN. ELIAS. PROPHET.	"THE CHRIST OF GOD."
MY THOUGHT?	
"THINK ON THESE THINGS."	

I. What Christ expects of his followers. 1. *Insight* (verses 18-20). They are to see in that rejected, wandering Galilean the anointed King of Israel and the chosen Son of God. 2. *Faith* (verses 21, 22). They would soon see their leader seized, scourged, crucified. But their faith must not falter. They must believe on him still, and wait until he should appear “alive after his passion.” Their faith tested would then be rewarded. 3. *Self-denial* (verses 23-25). He who would be Christ's follower must be prepared to lose all things, even his life, in

Christ's service. Every worldly ambition and desire must be crucified on his cross. 4. *Confession* (verses 26, 27). There must also be the open acknowledgment of Jesus before men. We cannot afford to conceal our discipleship as a secret charm; it must be put on publicly, in sight of all the world.

II. What Christ bestows upon his followers. 1. *Instruction* (verses 18-22). How skillfully Jesus leads his disciples up to this great confession! He might have said to them, “I am the Christ,” but he chose the better plan of bringing them by a series of questions into such a condition of assurance as would prompt them to say, “Thou art the Christ.” 2. *Eternal life* (verses 23-25). He who makes Christ his choice may lose all, even his life. But he will find that he has saved his real life, for the eternal life is his, a present and an everlasting possession. 3. *Honor* (verses 26, 27). It is a small thing to own Christ before men, and in our time costs little. But it will be a great thing to be owned by Christ in the presence of his glory and in the midst of the angel bands.

A MOMENTOUS REVELATION.

A LIFE FOR THE SAVIOUR'S
LOST FOR THE SAKE
SAVED.

A LIFE FOR SELF'S
LIVED FOR THE SAKE
LOST.

“WHAT IS A MAN ADVANTAGED, IF HE GAIN THE WHOLE
WORLD, AND . . . BE CAST AWAY.”

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

On Cæsarea Philippi and the region in which Jesus now was, see *Thomson*, "Land and Book," new edition, ii, 470-485; *Tristram*, "Land of Israel;" *Macgregor*, "Rob Roy on the Jordan;" *Stanley*, "Sinai and Palestine," 294, etc. *Canon Liddon's* Bampton Lectures, "The Divinity of our Lord." *John Wesley's* sermon on "The Important Question;" *Mark Hopkins's* sermon on "Self-denial;" *F. D. Huntington's* sermon on "The Cross a Burden or a Glory."



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS IX AND X.

1. The transfiguration (Matt. 17. 1-13; Mark 9. 2-13; Luke 9. 28-36). 2. The demoniac boy (Matt. 17. 14-20; Mark 9. 14-29; Luke 9. 37-43). 3. Christ again foretells his death and resurrection (Matt. 17. 22, 23; Mark 9. 30-32; Luke 9. 43-45). 4. The shekel in the fish's mouth (Matt. 17. 24-27). 5. Discourse on humility and forgiveness (Matt. 18; Mark 9. 33-50; Luke 9. 46-50). 6. Christ at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7. 1-52). 7. The woman taken in adultery—an anecdote which is so Christly in its tone that it is with sincere sorrow some scholars feel compelled to admit that it is the addition of a later hand (John 8. 1-12). 8. Discourse on the Light of the world (John 8. 12-30). 9. Discourse on spiritual freedom (John 8. 31-59). 10. The final departure from Galilee (Matt. 8. 19-22; 19. 1, 2; Mark 10. 1; Luke 9. 51-62). 11. The mission of the seventy (Luke 10. 1-24).



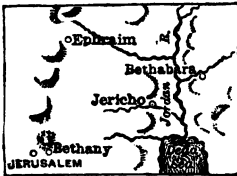
LESSON X.—MARCH 8.

TRUE LOVE TO ONE'S NEIGHBOR.—LUKE 10. 25-37.

[Read Luke 9. 51-62, and 10. 1-42.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.—Luke 10. 27.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.



TIME.—A. D. 29, probably November, for it was after the Feast of Tabernacles (held about October 11), and before the Feast of Dedication (held early in December). During the final journey of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. Perhaps six months before the crucifixion.

PLACE.—Probably Perea, the region "beyond Jordan." Nearly all of that wonderful series of parables which give the broadest views of God's love for us and of our duty to love our fellow-men, and for which we are indebted to Luke, were spoken here. Perea was, in the time of our Lord, a very populous and prosperous region, under government of Herod the Tetrarch. It lay along the direct route from Galilee to Jerusalem.

LESSON HYMN.—

Who is thy neighbor? He whom thou Hast power to aid or bless;
Whose aching heart or burning brow Thy soothing hand may press.
Thy neighbor? 'Tis the fainting poor, Whose eye with want is dim;
O enter thou his humble door, With aid and peace for him.
Thy neighbor? He who drinks the cup When sorrow drowns the brim;
With words of high, sustaining hope, Go thou and comfort him.—*W. B. O. Peabody.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (March 2), True Love to One's Neighbor, Luke 10. 25-37. *Tuesday*, Samaritans despised, John 4. 1-9. *Wednesday*, The law to Israel, Lev. 19. 9-18. *Thursday*, The royal law, James 2. 1-9. *Friday*, Divine compassion, Matt. 5. 38-48. *Saturday*, Overcome with good, Rom. 12. 9-21. *Sunday*, Love, the chief, 1 Cor. 18.

ILLUSTRATIVE PASSAGES.—Matt. 19. 16-22, Mark 10. 17-22, and Luke 18. 18-23 tell of a rich young ruler who asked the same question as was asked by this lawyer. That incident will illustrate this, but must not be confounded with it. No doubt the question was often asked, for it was a time of unsettling and of tumult in the moral and intellectual, as well as in the political, world. From end to end the Bible shows how like to God was this good Samaritan. Notice these parallels phrase by phrase: 1. "A certain Samaritan . . . saw him." "I have seen the affliction of my people" (Exod. 3. 7). 2. "Had compassion on him." "Have heard their cry" (Exod. 3. 7). 3. "Went to him." "I am come to deliver" (Exod. 3. 8). 4. "Bound up his wounds." "He healeth . . . and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm 147. 3). 5. "Brought him to an inn." "Into a land . . . flowing with milk and honey" (Ezek. 20. 6). 6. "Took care of him." "He kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deut. 32. 10). 7. "Two pence . . . gave . . . to the host." "The Lord preserveth the strangers" (Psalm 146. 9). 8. "Whatsoever . . . more . . . I will repay." "To save them to the uttermost" (Heb. 7. 25).

Authorized Version.

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

Revised Version.

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, 'Master, what

26 shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law?

¹ Matt. 19. 16; 22. 25.

¹ Or, Teacher.

I. THE LAW OF LOVE. VERSES 25-28.

25. A certain lawyer—He was not like our "attorney" or "counselor," but resembled the *softas* among the Moslems, the rabbis among the later Jews, and was something like professors of theology among us, only, of course, not attached to any special seminary. His profession was to study and interpret the Jewish law, both as contained in the Scriptures and derived from tradition. **Stood up**—This implies that they were in some public place of course and teaching. **Tempted him**—To tempt him signifies to prove his skill by a question, as was usual among Jewish doctors. He may have hoped to convict him of some unorthodox statement which would injure his reputation as a teacher. **Master**—Uniting in his salutation affected respect and thinly disguised contempt. **What shall I do to inherit eternal life**—The question is peremptory, as if he expected to unmask a pretender. Similar questions, though in a different spirit, were asked by the young ruler (Luke 18. 18), the Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2. 37), and the jailer (Acts 16. 30). There can be no more important question than one which asks the condition of a sinner's acceptance with God and his hope of everlasting glory.

Illustration 81. "There are overshot wheels and undershot. In the one case the motive power falls from above; in the other the water turns the wheel from below. The first is the more powerful. Men, like wheels, are turned by forces from various sources, and too many men by the undercurrent of wrong motives."—*Spurgeon*.

26. What is written in the law—As though he would say, "You are a lawyer; answer your own question by the law." Thus by a skillful retort, couched in courteous and complimentary language, our Lord avoided the snare, and, instead of being tested by the lawyer, really tested him. **How readest thou**—What text or texts embody the sum of the precepts of the law? The lawyer expects Jesus to cite the texts, but is constrained to give them himself. He

Authorized Version.

27 And he answering said, ²Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and ³thy neighbor as thyself.

² Deut. 6. 5; Heb. 8. 10.—³ Lev. 19. 18.

Revised Version.

27 how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God ²with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy

² Gr. from.

tried to create the impression that he knew how to inherit eternal life and that he doubted whether this Nazarene did; now he has opportunity to show whether he is familiar with the letter of the law and whether he un-

NOTE, 1. The great importance Romanists condemned Luther for apostate rule of Christian conduct. But enthrones the law as the rule of life. of Israel's encampment in the wilderness was the Ark of the Covenant, and in

the heart of the in-

ship, at the spot most people, was to be

2. If Christ attached to the writings of the much more should we the supreme revela-

3. What we find in what we bring to it. the same height as his Bible study: (1) Read morning and another

a day pass without words to memory. morning or the even-

utive. (4) Read in chapters. (5) Prac-

ing up parallel pas-

secutive reading by study of special subjects. (7) Here are a few passages which may be said

to contain the gist and pith and marrow of the whole divine word: the General Epistle of James; the Gospel of John; the Sermon on the Mount; Eph. 5 and 6; Gal. 5 and 6; Rom. 8; Heb. 11;

1 Cor. 13; the two Epistles to Timothy; the Book of Proverbs; and Psalms 1, 8, 19, 24, 32,

37, 49, 51, 53, 73, 90, 103, 107, 121, 131, 133.

27. He answering said—In the words of Holy Writ (taken from Deut. 6. 5, and Lev. 19. 18). This was read almost daily in the synagogue, and the lawyer had it at his tongue's end. **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God**—We have here the language of law expressive of God's claims. Love embraces every other affection and all that is proper to be done to its object. It is the most personal, the tenderest, the most unselfish and divine of all affections. **All thy heart**—With true-heartedness. **All thy soul**—Putting warmth into the affection. **All thy strength**—With intensity. It is impossible for us to distinguish in action between mind and heart and will. We think, feel, act as a whole. We are not constructed like a modern vessel, divided into so many water-tight compartments that may sink or swim alone. Our love for God is not to be a mere emotion, but the abiding affection of the intellect. **All thy mind**—Intelligently, not with blind devotion. **Thy neighbor as thyself**—Everyone knows how painful it is to be spoken evil of or injured in our property or persons, and how pleasant it is to receive the kind look, the warm greeting, the helping hand; by this pain and this pleasure



"ON HIS OWN BEAST."

derstands the spirit of the law. attached to the Old Testament. pealing to God's word as the though Christ was the Truth he The tabernacle was in the center ness. In its most holy place that ark the table of stone. In

most shrine of wor- holly of all to God's found God's word. so much importance old covenant, how prize the record of tion given to us! the Bible depends on "Shakespeare is just reader." **4.** Rules for

some portion every at night. (2) Never let committing some few

(3) Let either the ing reading be consec- paragraphs rather than

tice the habit of look- sages. (6) Vary con-

secutive reading by study of special subjects. (7) Here are a few passages which may be said

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Authorized Version.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and ⁴thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to ⁵justify himself, said unto Je'sus, And who is my neighbor?

30 And Je'sus answering said, A certain man went down from Je-ru'sa-lem to Jer'i-cho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a cer-

Revised Version.

28 mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered

29 right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto

30 Je'sus, And who is my neighbor? Je'sus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Je-ru'sa-lem to Jer'i-cho; and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed,

31 leaving him half dead. And by chance a

⁴ Lev. 18. 5; Neh. 9. 29; Ezek. 20. 11, 12, 21; Rom. 10. 5.—
⁵ Chap. 18. 15.

we are to judge what we are to do to others. What is it to be sensible of another man's misery? To feel it yourself. You cannot help your brother till you put all your sensibilities into his sad place, while you take him into your heart. Before you give to the beggar your heart must turn beggar for him. You must feel every wound of the man knocked down by the wayside before your oil and wine poured into those wounds can do any good.

Illustration 82. The planet does not need a chart of its course to keep it in its orbit, but a center of gravity around which it may revolve. Give it this, and its course will be perfect. So, to make us pure we do not need rules of moral conduct so much as a power which will sway and govern our nature. Now, love to God is the gravitation of the soul; secure this, and the soul gets back to its orbit, and thus secures rectitude.

28. Thou hast answered right—Not, Thou hast made a mistake; thou hast nothing to do; I will do all. **This do, and thou shalt live**—"Christ shifts the question from intellect to conscience and practice, and that pinches."—*Maclaren*.

II. THE LIFE OF LOVE. VERSES 29-37.

29. Willing to justify himself—If the answer was so simple as it appears to be he felt an excuse was needed for having approached Jesus with so trifling a question. He would silence his conscience and redeem his reputation by raising a side issue. **Who is my neighbor**—"Means, Whom am I obliged to love? A question only put by those who are more desirous to know who are not their neighbors than who are. If explained to mean the lawyer's dear brother Jew he had a good conscience and a safe soul; if Jesus replied, 'Even the Samaritan is your neighbor,' the bystanders would be on the lawyer's side."—*Whedon*. Every awakened sinner has a battle to fight at this point. His immediate tendency is to excuse himself on the ground of the inconsistencies of others, want of explicitness in the divine command, or of his own correct views, moral life, or generous giving. So long as this disposition exists there is no meanness to receive the Gospel. Excuses are no reasons.

30. Jesus answering—The word in the original means "taking up a discourse," and is used with great propriety here, as our Lord did not give a direct reply to the lawyer's question. **A certain man**—Rendered by *Campbell*, "A man of Jerusalem." He was evidently a Jew. **Went down**—"Jericho was 800 feet below the Mediterranean Sea, Jerusalem 2,500 above it, making a descent of 3,300 feet in 18 miles."—*Rice*. Modern travelers pronounce the whole road the most dangerous in Palestine. It lies through a deep ravine, lined with holes, caves, and hiding places for robbers. **Fell among thieves**—Both before and after this period this neighborhood was greatly infested with bands of robbers and murderers, many of whom had been employed by Herod in rebuilding the temple, and were now disbanded and given to a life of plunder. **Stripped him**—Of his property as well as his raiment, and left him bleeding, helpless, dying.

31. And by chance—Not what is generally understood by chance or accident, for there is no such thing; but by a coincidence. **A certain priest**—Returning, doubtless, from his fort-
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Authorized Version.

tain priest that way; and when he saw him,
⁶ he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Le'vite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain 'Sa-mar'i-tan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

Revised Version.

certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Le'vite also, when he came to the place, and saw

33 him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Sa-mar'i-tan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he

* Psalm 38. 11.—† John 4. 9.

night's service in the temple. It is said that twelve thousand priests and Levites resided in Jericho. **Passed by on the other side**—"Afraid of being himself attacked, or of incurring ceremonial defilement, or of being detained. Want of feeling is made the more striking by the fact that he had noted the man's need. This seemed to have convinced him of the greatness



THE ROAD FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICO.

of the danger awaiting him if he delayed. Neither the voice of humanity nor that of nationality nor that of religion spoke so loudly to his heart as the desire for self-preservation."—*Lange*.

Illustration 33. "Many do with opportunities as children do at the seashore; with sand they fill their little hands, and then let the grains fall through, one by one, till all are gone."—*T. Jones*.

32. **A Levite**—"The Levites performed the humbler services of the temple, as cleaning, carrying fuel, and acting as choristers."—*Whedon*. **Came and looked on him**—His conduct was better and worse than his official superiors—better, in that he did feel pity and stopped to look on the sufferer; worse, because he selfishly strangled the noble impulse in its birth. Engrossment with self shuts eyes and heart to the piteous sights that fill the world. The misery forced on our notice is left to bleed or weep itself to death without a finger being lifted to prevent it. "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn."

Illustration 34. You could run a steam-engine with ice water as easily as you can do God's work in this world without tender-heartedness.

33. **But a certain Samaritan**—The Samaritans were a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles who accepted the Pentateuch only as their Bible. Down to this century the Jews of Palestine hate them more bitterly than they hate either Christians or Turks. This hatred is compounded of race antagonism, oft-repeated tribal strife, utter nonintercourse socially and in business, and religious bigotry and jealousy. The nationality of the helper answers the lawyer's question, "Who?" by brushing away all national distinctions, all prejudices of creed, all enmities

Authorized Version.

34 And ⁸ went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two ⁹ pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Revised Version.

34 was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and 35 took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two ⁹ pence, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I

⁸ Exod. 23. 4, 5; Prov. 24. 17; Rom. 12. 20; 1 Thess. 5. 15.—
⁹ See Matt. 20. 2.

⁸ See marginal note on Matt. 18. 28.

rooted in history. The most hostile and hated, scorned and loathed, of human beings is our neighbor if he needs help. **Had compassion**—Mark the beautiful climax: the compassionate heart, the helping hand, the ready foot, the true-hearted charge. Sympathy is always practical.

Illustration 85. One day a hearse was slowly driven up the Rue de Clichy on its way to Montmartre (Paris), bearing a corpse in a poor, poplar wood coffin. Not a man followed; not even a dog. It was a day of dismal rain. Passers-by lifted the hat, as is usual in France when a funeral passes, and that was all. At length it passed two English laborers who had drifted to the continental city. A right feeling spoke from beneath their serge jackets. "Poor fellow," said one, "no one follows him; let us two follow." And the two took off their hats and walked reverently after the remains of the deserted stranger all the way to the cemetery.

Illustration 86. "Have you not seen in the woods, on a late autumn morning, a poor fungus or mushroom—a plant without solidity, that seemed nothing but mush or jelly—by its constant, total, and inconceivably gentle pushing, manage to break its way up through the frosty ground, and actually to lift a hard crust on its head? It is the symbol of the power of kindness."—*Emerson*.

34. And went to him—Acting promptly and getting close to the one he would help. **Oil and wine**—Ancient and effective remedies—the wine to cleanse, the oil to heal. **To an inn**—Not like the inn mentioned Luke 2. 7, a place of shelter, merely, but a public hostelry, where food and attendance were supplied. The ruins of an ancient inn yet stand midway on the direct road from Jerusalem to Jericho. **Took care of him**—Bestowing personal attentions of far more worth than money.

Illustration 87. Never delay to follow a noble impulse. A Glasgow merchant died recently without having made a will. He left a widow, one son, and two daughters. The son hastened home from London and at once settled his father's fortune on his mother and sisters. When asked why he was in so great haste he said, "I dared not wait. What I have done it was my duty to do; but had I waited time would have brought temptation, and I might at length have claimed all that the law allows me." There spoke a wise Christian.

Illustration 88. Sympathy brings men to Christ. Harlan Page went early to church and found a stranger sitting alone. He began conversation, and the stranger was won by his warm heart and gracious manner. Before the service was begun he was melted into penitence, exclaiming, "Until now Christians always kept me at arm's length!"

Illustration 89. "As I was going to the hills early one misty morning I saw something moving on a mountain side so strange-looking that I took it for a monster. When I came nearer to it I found it was a man. When I came up to him I found he was my brother."—*Samuel Smiles*.

35. Took out two pence—The wages of a laboring man for two days, equivalent to about three dollars in our day. **Gave them to the host**—The janitor of the khan. **I will repay**—He evidently had good credit at the inn.

Illustration 90. Christian sympathy should include all. "In the fortifications on the Dardanelles there are some antique guns, which are so built in that they can hit a vessel only at one point (on the sea); they are useless except at the moment when a ship is passing that point. The benevolence of men who limit their good will to certain classes and conditions is like one of these guns. It can meet only one class of cases; whereas it ought to be like the swivel gun upon the turret-ship, which sweeps the horizon round and round."—*William M. Taylor*. Not color, nor temper, nor manners, neither moral nor social degradation, nor poverty, nor ignorance, nor dirt, nor vice, should exclude any man or woman from the sympathy of our hearts or the help of our hands.

Authorized Version.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Je'sus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Revised Version.

36 come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Je'sus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

36. Which . . . was neighbor—"The first lesson of this parable is so plain that it cannot be missed: Whoever is in need is my neighbor. True love knows nothing of sectarian, or national, or race distinctions. The second lesson has been often overlooked: The spirit of genuine philanthropy is a Christian spirit, wherever found. It is recognized by Christ in the Samaritan as well as in the Jew, in the Gentile Cornelius as well as in the orthodox Dorcas."—*Abbott*. It makes a vast difference whether we say "Who is my neighbor?" or "Whose neighbor am I?" The one fixes attention on men's claim on me, the other on my debts to them.

37. He that showed mercy—He grudgingly, and without soiling his lips with the word "Samaritan," answers as he could not help doing. **Do . . . likewise**—Accepting the interpretation, and in a short, keen sentence applying it. Let this be a definition of a neighbor's duty. The world would be paradise if men obeyed the teaching of this wonderful story.

WHA'S MY NEIBOR?

Doon frae Jerus'lem a traveler tuk The laigh road to Jericho;
It had an ill name an' mony a cruik; It was lang and unco' haw.
Oot cam' the robbers an' fell on the man, An' knockit him on the heid;
Took a' whauron they could lay their han', An' left him nakit for deid.
By cam' a minister o' the kirk: "A sair mishanter!" he cried;
"Wha kens whaur the villains may lurk? I's haud to the ither side."
By cam' an elder o' the kirk: Like a young horse he shied;
"Fie! there's a bonny mornin's wark!" An' he sprang't to the ither side.
By cam' ane gaed to the wrang kirk; Douce he trotted alang;
"Puir body!" he cried; an' wi' a yerk Aff o' his cuddy he sprang.
He ran to the body an' turned it ower; "There's life t' the man!" he cried;
He wasna' ane to stan' an' glower An' haud to the ither side.
He doctored his wounds, an' hetsed him on To the back o' the beasty douce;
An' held him there till, a weary man, He langt at the Halfway House.
He ten'd him a' nicht, an' at dawn o' day, "Lan'lord" (says he), "latna him lack;
There's auchteenpence; ony mair ootlay I'll saddle as I come back."
Say nae mair, neibors—say nae sic word, Wi' hert ave arguin' an' chill;
No' "Whae's the neibor to me, O Lord?" But "Wha am I neibor till?"—*George MacDonald*.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

Here is an answer to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" for such it is "to inherit eternal life." The answer involves four conditions:

I. Read God's law. Verse 26. "How readest thou?" Life is a voyage which every soul takes once, and once only, over a trackless, perilous sea. But there is a chart, which the navigator may obtain and which he should study, and that chart is the word of God. We cannot study it too closely if we would make a successful voyage.

II. Obey God's law. Verse 28. "This do, and thou shalt live." The Holy Scriptures were given to us, not to gratify curiosity, but for practical guidance. He who would inherit eternal life must not only learn the way, but must also walk in it. We should be doers of the word, and not hearers and readers only.

III. Love God. Verse 27. 1. With the heart, the impulsive, affectional nature. 2. With the soul, the thoughtful nature. 3. With the strength, the active nature, doing as well as feeling. 4. With the mind, the volitional nature, giving to it the choice of the will. He who loves God will worship him, will commune with him, will obey him, as the child who loves his father.

IV. **Love man.** Verses 27-37. "Thy neighbor as thyself." The parable emphasizes this love, and shows its true characteristics. 1. *Universal love*, for all men; not limited by relationship, by race, or by color. Just as the Jew was called upon to love a Samaritan, as the lesson of the parable, so we are to love our fellow-men, whether they be native or foreign; whether they be white or yellow or black; whether they be lovable or unlovable in their traits. We should love men as Christ loved them, because they are men. 2. *Sympathetic love*, feeling for others and with others. The priest may have felt a twinge of pity; the Levite looked

PREACHING vs. PRACTICING.

	THE	
PRIEST		SAMARITAN
LEVITE		
PREACHED		PRACTICED
	RELIGION.	
ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.		

"IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS."

at the sufferer, and may have dropped a tear; but only the Samaritan felt his wrongs as his own. 3. *Practical love*, willingness to give genuine aid, to do some actual work for our fellowman. What actual work have you done to relieve any man's trouble or make him happier and better? 4. *Self-denying love*. This man gave freely his time, his effort, his money, and sacrificed his own safety, to help his neighbor. "Go, and do thou likewise."

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

On the Good Samaritan, *Andrews*, "Life of Our Lord," 363, 364; *Eldersheim*, "Life and Times of Jesus," 234-239; *Farrar*, "Life of Christ," ii, 130-132; *Geikie*, "Holy Land," i, 168, 169; *Trench*, "Parables," 251-264. On doctors of the law, *Stapfer*, "Palestine in the Time of Christ," 298-309. On the first commandment, *Farrar*, ii, 238-242. On the Levites, *Stapfer*, 428; *Eldersheim*, "The Temple," 63-70. On oil for wounds, *Stapfer*, 255. See *Professor Drummond's* "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" on eternal life. On the geography of the lesson see *Thomson*, "The Land and the Book," 316; *Tristram*, "Land of Israel," 196. Notable sermons on this parable are *Dean Stanley's* "Two Great Commandments," *Richard Watson's* "Good Samaritan," *F. D. Maurice's* "Spirit of Love."



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS X AND XI.

1. The visit to Martha and Mary (Luke 10. 38-42). 2. Healing of the man born blind (John 9). 3. The Good Shepherd (John 10. 1-21). 4. Christ at the Feast of Dedication (John 10. 22-42).



LESSON XI.—MARCH 15.

TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER.—LUKE 11. 1-13.

[Read Luke 11. 1-54.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.—Luke 11. 9.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME AND PLACE.—This conversation occurred after the third passover, probably between the Feast of Tabernacles and that of the Dedication, and possibly in *Bethany*; but, like the other teachings of this portion of the gospel, the time and place are uncertain. It is probable

that Jesus twice gave to his disciples this form of prayer. The version given in Matt. 6. 9-13 differs in several particulars from this. Its occasion and the words and events which followed it are so different from those given in Luke that the two accounts can hardly be regarded as different reports of the same original. This was given about a year after that.

ORIGINALITY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.—"As respects the value of this precept, the singular fancy of *Herder* in his explications of the New Testament, that the Paternoster could be derived from an oriental source, from the *Zend Avesta*, has been weighed by later science and found wanting. For the fourth and fifth petitions there are no parallels whatever extant; for the third and sixth only imperfect ones. For the first two there are the most, but by no means literal ones. In no case can this partial agreement with others take from this model anything of its high worth. Not so much in particular expressions as rather in the tenor and spirit, in the arrangement and climax, of the whole lies its peculiar worth; and those who can assert of the Paternoster that it is only the joining together of rabbinic expressions might assure us with the same right that from a suitable number of single arms, legs, and members one could compose an animated human body. We honor much more the wisdom of the Saviour in this, that he would teach his disciples no chords which would have been entirely strange to their unpracticed lips; and in vain do we seek here for the traces of a limited Judaistic spirit."

ANALYSIS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.—"1. God, our Father, who is in heaven: (1) Father; (2) Heavenly Father; (3) Our heavenly Father. These three words are a doctrine of faith, hope, and love. 2. Hallowed be thy name: (1) The first prayer; (2) The dearest prayer; (3) The last prayer of the disciple, of the Saviour. It is yet continued in heaven, and even when the kingdom is already come, sin forgiven, etc. 3. Thy kingdom come: (1) Whither? Into heart, house, Church, world. (2) Why? Then only is the Father's name glorified, the purpose of the Son attained, the fellowship of the Spirit complete. (3) How are we to pray for this? With thankfulness, with zeal, with steadfast hope. 4. Give us to-day our daily bread. Every word a doctrine: (1) Give, the doctrine of dependence; (2) Bread, the doctrine of contentment; (3) Our bread, the doctrine of industriousness; (4) To-day, the doctrine of freedom from care; (5) Daily bread, the doctrine of trust; (6) Give it to us, the doctrine of love. 5. The noticeable relation in which this part of the Lord's Prayer stands to the great whole: (1) The Saviour teaches us, it is true, to pray also for daily bread, but (2) Over against one prayer for earthly things stand six for heavenly (Matt. 6. 33); (3) This one prayer is preceded by three for the glory of God, and (4) Is followed immediately by three others which respect something infinitely higher than its own object. All is most pregnant with instruction and significance. 6. Forgive us our debts: (1) Even the disciple of the Saviour sins continually; (2) These sins also are debts before God; (3) For these debts also is daily forgiveness ready; (4) This forgiveness becomes our portion only when we, for our part, are disposed to forgiveness toward others. 7. For also we forgive: (1) No ground of our hope; (2) No means of compelling an answer to prayer; (3) No intimation of the measure according to which we expect forgiveness, but a sign: (1) Of humility, which is conscious of its own debt; (2) Of love, to which "Forgive us" is more than an idle sound; (3) Of uprightness before God, which cannot possibly have a controversy with our brother, since the Father has remitted so infinitely more (Matt. 18. 23-35). 8. Lead us not into temptation: (1) The way is often so dark; (2) The temptation is so great; (3) Our hearts are so weak: (4) The consequences of an eternally repeated fall are so lamentable."—*Lange*.

LESSON HYMN.—

Our Father, God, who art in heaven, All hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come; thy will be done In heaven and earth the same.
Give us this day our daily bread; And as we those forgive
Who sin against us, so may we Forgiving grace receive.
Into temptation lead us not; From evil set us free;
And thine the kingdom, thine the power And glory, ever be.—*Adoniram Judson*.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (March 9), Teaching about Prayer, Luke 11. 1-13. *Tuesday*, Sincerity in prayer, Matt. 6. 1-15. *Wednesday*, In His name, John 16. 23-33. *Thursday*, Ask in faith, 1 John 5. 9-15. *Friday*, Importunity in prayer, Luke 18. 1-8. *Saturday*, Prayer answered, 2 Kings 20. 1-11. *Sunday*, Testimony of experience, Psalm 34. 1-10.

Authorized Version.

1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, ¹ Our Father which art in heaven, Hal-

Revised Version.

1 And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, ¹ Father, Hallowed be

¹ Matt. 6. 9.¹ Many ancient authorities read *Our Father*, which art in heaven. See Matt. 6. 9.**I. THE MODEL PRAYER. VERSES 1-4.**

"THE DOOR IS NOW SHUT."

1. When he ceased—The disciples may have noticed some change in Jesus, some sign of a blessing received, such as is mentioned in Luke 9. 29. They could hardly fail to note that their Master derived spiritual strength from his seasons of prayer. **Teach us to pray**—Give us a form. How welcome such a request must have been to Jesus, to whom the disciples so often brought carnal and worldly petitions (Matt. 20. 21). "The three wants contemplated and provided for in this lesson," says *Dr. A. B. Bruce*, "the want of ideas, of words, and of faith, are as common as they are grievous." **John also taught**—The Baptist, who could give such specific directions (Luke 3. 12-14) to various classes of penitents as to the needed changes in their mode of life, could be quite as explicit in his directions as to how his disciples should pray.

2. When ye pray, say—This prayer was not given merely as a formula to be repeated; it is neither ritual nor magic, but, rather, it is a type and model. "Every Christian prayer should bear the impression of this prayer," says *Dr. Godet*, "but in a free, varied, and spontaneous manner." *Dr. Bruce* has very beautifully said that the six petitions of this model prayer enter into every Christian's supplication; but they do so much as the alphabet of a language enters into the extended and eloquent utterances of the speaker, who may not think

at all of the letters of which the words he utters are composed. **Our Father**—Jesus himself used this form of address (John 17. 21, 24), and now admits his disciples to the same direct and personal form of filial appeal. While Isaiah (64. 8) has applied it to Jehovah's fatherly interest in his people as a whole, Jesus gave his disciples the word for daily use. They could not yet, of course, understand what significance the new style of address would have for them after Jesus had risen and ascended (Gal. 4. 4-7; Rom. 8. 15-17). Note that "our" does not belong to the text here. "God is to be addressed not as Creator, or Ruler, or Providential Disposer, or as the Omnipotent One, but as Our Father. This comprehensive phrase gives us virtually all the rest."—*Cowles*. **Hallowed**—Reverenced. **Thy name**—Among the ancients the name

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
lowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.	3 thy name. Thy kingdom come. ³ Give us
3 Give us <i>a</i> day by day our daily bread.	4 day by day ³ our daily bread. And for-
4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.	give us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation. ⁴
<i>a Or, for the day.</i>	³ Many ancient authorities add <i>Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.</i> See Matt. 6. 10.— ⁴ Gr. <i>our bread for the coming day.</i> ⁴ Many ancient authorities add <i>but deliver us from the evil one (or, from evil).</i> See Matt. 6. 13.

stood for character in a sense that it does not now. "Hallowed be thy name," indicates reverence for all that the name stands for. With that love which the word "Father" suggests we are to feel that awe which the thought of his holiness inspires. We are not to think of God as less than he is (Psalm 50. 21). **Thy kingdom come**—This aspiration, so characteristic of every devout Israelite (Luke 2. 25), had peculiar significance to men who had already preached throughout Galilee that the kingdom of God was at hand (Luke 9. 2). Only those who thought of God as God could offer this prayer with confidence; only those who had been taught to think of themselves as his children could venture to make so lofty and comprehensive a request. So Nehemiah, when asked by the king what is in his heart, asks largely (Neh. 2. 2, 5). The third petition, "Thy will be done," in Matt. 6, may have been regarded by Jesus as already comprised in the second—God's kingdom, limited by the hearts he controls. Wonderful social and political changes must take place before God's kingdom is perfectly come. Many such reforms have taken place since these words were first spoken. Many more are on the threshold.

3. Give us—In Greek, "Give us constantly." The Father is the unfailing source of sustenance. **Day by day**—The earlier form of the prayer has a petition for a single day. We need daily supplies for every phase of our triple nature. **Our daily bread**—"No poor man will hesitate about the exact meaning of this petition."—*Godet*. And, it may be added, no hungry intellectual inquirer will hesitate as to its meaning; neither will any sincere seeker after spiritual nourishment. The usual supply of freshly baked bread included enough for the following day. This is no contradiction of the command not to be anxious for the morrow (Matt. 6. 34). Prayer is the divine method of curing anxiety (Phil. 4. 6). Notice the scope of the word "our." Is it not "my" bread, nor "my family's bread." Observe the order of these petitions (Matt. 6. 33).

4. And—Notice the "and." We must have life, but we must also have peace with God. **Man shall not live by bread alone.** The tense denotes greater urgency here than in the previous petition, "Give us." The disciples, though some of them had seen their Master pointed out as the Lamb of God, could not as yet know how his atoning work was to make forgiveness possible (Rom. 3. 24-26). **Forgive us our sins; for**—That word "for," meaning both "because" and "if," one can hardly utter without a tremor. Suppose that we have not forgiven everyone that has wronged us! **We also forgive**—The Revised Version is even stronger, "we ourselves also forgive." Jesus puts a plea in the mouths of his disciples: if men are merciful, will not God be merciful? Compare verse 13. **Indebted**—Common obligations between man and man are used to represent the graver obligations which sin binds upon God and man. **Lead us not into temptation**—"But we are told elsewhere 'God tempteth no man,' and 'every man is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.' The words do not mean, 'Lead us not into the possibility of temptation,' for without that possibility we should sink into a condition of spiritual invertebrates. 'Let us not experience the consequence of our guilt in intenser probationary trials.'"—*Lange*. "If the occasion of sinning be present, grant that the desire may not be found in me. If the desire is there, grant that the occasion may not present itself."—*Godet*. **Deliver us from evil**—These words are not in the oldest manuscripts. They were probably inserted in some manuscripts by copyists who thought that this prayer ought to agree *verbatim* with that in Matt. 6.

Authorized Version.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine ^b in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him:

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee?

8 I say unto you, ^a Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet be-

Revised Version.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend

6 me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have

7 nothing to set before him; and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give

8 thee? I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend,

^b Or, out of his way. — ^a Chap. 12. 1, etc.; Rom. 15. 30.

II. A STORY ABOUT PRAYER. VERSES 5-8.

5. **And he said unto them**—Here comes another story. How much we as teachers have to learn from Jesus in the art of putting things! How wonderfully the most ordinary incidents of life are drawn upon by him as illustrations of the deepest truths!

"He spoke of lilies, vines and corn, The sparrow and the raven,
And words so natural, yet so wise, Were on men's hearts engraven.
And yeast and bread, and flax and cloth, And eggs and fish and candles—
See how the whole familiar world He most divinely handles."—*Lynch*.

Note the thought underneath this parable. If by importunate prayer a selfish man can be won to liberal deeds and an unjust man to do right, how more certainly shall the benevolent Lord bestow and the righteous God do justice! **A friend**—Observe the threefold repetition of this word. What human friends can be relied on to do for one another the Father in heaven must certainly be thought of as sure to do. **Shall go**—The word used implies one's going a considerable distance in the darkness to reach the friend's house. **At midnight**—As much activity as possible is indulged in in the East after the sun has gone down, so great is the heat there. Nevertheless, this was a very unseasonable hour. **Lend me three loaves**—That would be a preposterous request in this country; but the entire Orient has in all ages lived from hand to mouth. The midnight journey, the unannounced visit at this untimely hour, the effrontery of the borrower, the churlishness of the lender, the serious difficulty of unbarring the door, and the failure to mention the mother of the family—indeed, all the touches descriptive of social and domestic life—are thoroughly characteristic of Eastern manners.

6. **Nothing to set before him**—As this man asks not for himself, but on behalf of another, he represents the true spirit of prayer. "Give us our daily bread" (verse 3).

7. **Trouble me not**—The unwillingness of a human friend to respond under such circumstances corresponds to what sometimes seems to us to be the heaviness of the Lord's ear toward our prayers (Isa. 59. 1). It seems so, though it is not so. **The door is now shut**—To a drowsy man so simple a matter as unlocking the outer door would seem a very arduous undertaking. **My children are with me in bed**—Eastern families frequently sleep in one room. Jesus states the case as disadvantageously for himself as possible. He selects the meanest, most uncivil man that can be thought of, and subjects him to the most unreasonable request that a shameless and impudent neighbor could make; if such a man does what such a man asks, what will God refuse to do for us? **I cannot rise**—A sincere utterance. The stupor of his first sleep makes motion seem impossible. If, however, his friend outside will but keep on pounding and shouting, the aroused man will find rising easier anon.

8. **I say unto you**—Advancing to the application of a most important truth, the tone of Jesus becomes more serious. **Because of his importunity**—In Greek, "his shamelessness."

Authorised Version.	Revised Version.
cause of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.	yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him ^a as many as he need-
9 ³ And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.	9 eth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.	10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that
11 'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?	11 knocketh it shall be opened. And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask ^a a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish,
12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he coffer him a scorpion?	12 and he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a
13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more	13 scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children,
³ Matt. 7. 7; 21. 22; Mark 11. 24; John 15. 7; James 1. 5; 1 John 3. 22.— ⁴ Matt. 7. 9.— ^c Gr. give.	⁵ Or, <i>whatsoever things</i> .— ⁶ Some ancient authorities omit <i>a loaf, and he give him a stone?</i> or.

"It is presupposed here that the troublesome man goes on knocking and asking."—*Alford*. The plight of the man outside is a desperate one from the standpoint of oriental ideas. His embarrassment makes him disregard ordinary etiquette, and he keeps on thumping and shouting till his friend is wide awake, and now takes in the whole situation. **As many as he needeth**—The heavy sleeper is himself now, and will not limit the loan to three loaves asked for.

PERSISTENT PURPOSE generally wins. Nine men out of ten who have failed would have succeeded if they had kept on. We should have as much persistent purpose in our spiritual life as in our ordinary bargaining and borrowing. The great majority of those who are without the great blessings of God lack them because they have never earnestly and persistently sought them.

III. THE LAW OF PRAYER. VERSES 9-13.

9. **I say unto you**—Jesus was talking to people who had a distorted conception of God. And he said in effect, Even if God is just what you think he is, indifferent and heartless, your wisest course would be to ask as the man who wanted the loaves asked. Now he returns to the beautiful conception of the Fatherhood of God with which the lesson opened. **Ask...seek...knock**—Jesus conveys his lesson in the form of oriental poetry. The disciple of verse 1 has his answer. When they pray for success in their work of living for others they are to be persistent in their petitions. *Godet* suggests that this was a precept which Jesus had learned from his own experience (Luke 8. 21, 22; 2. 52).

10. **Every one that asketh receiveth**—True prayer is always answered. There is no drowsiness on the part of Him who never sleeps; there is no unwillingness on his part to give his children as much as they need.

11. **Any of you that is a father**—And so knows a father's feeling toward his own child. **Bread...stone**—Food is a convenient type of the many necessary things for the supply of which the child must be dependent upon his parent. When the disciples pray for the things they need they are to remember that they have come to their Father (verse 2). While they are to be earnest and persistent in their prayers they are never to think of God as indifferent to their needs or as likely to reward their petitions with things that will harm them. Thus the thought of God's love will inspire the faith that is not content with asking, but knocks. The Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15. 27) used the yet bolder argument, that if a man would give crumbs to his dog the Lord would not withhold a blessing even from a heathen woman. See how Jesus uses a like argument (Luke 12. 24).

13. **If ye then, being evil**—Human parents, with their ignorance and evil propensities, do yet understand the common physical wants of their children. **How much more shall your**

Authorised Version.
shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Revised Version.
how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

heavenly Father—And yet, though nineteen hundred years have passed since Jesus uttered these tender words, probably one half the people who went to church this morning have more real confidence in their earthly relatives than they have in their heavenly Father. **Give the Holy Spirit**—What food (verses 11, 12) is to the body the Spirit of God is to the soul. That Spirit awakens the Christian's consciousness of adoption and sonship, and inspires all Christian graces (Rom. 8. 16; Gal. 3. 2, 3; 5. 22, 23; Luke 12. 12). Long life, health, and wealth seem desirable, but they are not always really the best for us; but God's blessing brings with it the very best results, temporal and spiritual, and we may have it by asking for it.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

Every soul needs to pray. If Jesus Christ realized *his* need of prayer—He who was the effulgence of the Father's glory and the representative of his power—surely we who are poor and helpless need to call upon God. Our lesson shows us **The Traits of Successful Prayer**.

I. It is **Filial**. Verse 2. The secret of prayer is in our relation to God. He is "Our Father," and therefore we can call upon him as children. If that relationship is broken we have no claim on God, and must restore the relationship by repentance before we can expect an answer to our prayer.

II. It is **Submissive**. Verse 2. "Thy will be done." We pray, but not to make God willing, for he is ever willing to bless us. Our endeavor in prayer is to bring ourselves into the condition of fitness to receive God's will.

III. It is **Direct**. Verses 3, 4. There is no distinction between sacred and secular in the plans of God. We have the same right to pray specifically and directly for the bread of the body as for the bread of the soul.

IV. It is **Fraternal**. Verse 4. As God is our Father, so every man is our brother, and we should be loving, gentle, forgiving in our spirit toward those who have wronged us.

V. It is **Importunate**. Verses 5-9. If a selfish man will be moved by importunate supplication, how much more a loving, tender heavenly Father? Let us be persistent in our suit at the throne.

VI. It is **Believing**. Verses 10-13. It trusts in God's promise; it recognizes his love; it believes in the victory of faith.

VII. It is **Spiritual**. Verse 13. While we may pray for secular things, we should pray in the spiritual temper, and for the Holy Spirit as our possession. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Rites and forms have their advantages, but can never take the place of spiritual prayer.

GOD'S GREAT SPIRITUAL
STOREHOUSE
OPENED TO ALL.

ASK	AND	RECEIVE.
SEEK		FIND.
KNOCK		ENTER.

"COME NOW, FOR ALL THINGS ARE READY."

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS XI AND XII.

1. Woes against the Pharisees, uttered at a Pharisee's table (Luke 11. 36-54). 2. Warnings against the spirit of Pharisaism (Luke 12. 1-36). Luke 11. 14-36 does not belong chronologically in this connection, but rather between Lesson VII and Lesson VIII.

LESSON XII.—MARCH 22.

FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SERVANTS.—LUKE 12. 37-48.

[Read the chapter, Luke 12. 1-59.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.—Eph. 5. 18.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—A. D. 29. Shortly after the events of the last lesson.

PLACE.—Perea, beyond Jordan. The exact place in the journey to Jerusalem where the sermon recorded in this chapter was delivered cannot be determined.

THE LESSON STORY.—Pharisees were sent down from the capital to entrap the hated Galilean Teacher. Their accusation that he was in league with the evil one was met with such consummate skill as elicited the approval of the crowd and stung his enemies to the quick. Finding one of their own number in the town or village, these emissaries suggested that he invite Christ to a repast. The invitation was given and accepted. No sooner had they sat down than the malicious intent of the Pharisee and his friends became apparent. The exposure, indictment, and denunciation addressed by our Lord to this Pharisaic hierarchy constitute the most remarkable after-dinner speech on record. Meantime the crowd, aware of the contest, and expecting a great discourse, had multiplied until it seemed to reach the proportion of myriads (verse 1), that is, tens of thousands. The discourse which followed is one of the three most important chronicled by the evangelists. Part of it was addressed to the inner circle of the disciples. The section from which our lesson is taken closely resembles portions of the discourse delivered on the Mount of Olives the Tuesday before the crucifixion.

PARALLEL PASSAGE.—Matt. 24. 43-51.

LESSON HYMN.—

My soul, be on thy guard; Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard To draw thee from the skies.
O watch, and fight, and pray; The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew it boldly every day, And help divine implore.
Ne'er think the victory won, Nor lay thine armor down;
The work of faith will not be done, Till thou obtain the crown.—George Heath.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (March 18), Faithful and Unfaithful Servants, Luke 12. 35-48. *Tuesday*, Need of watchfulness, Matt. 24. 42-51. *Wednesday*, Ready and unready, Matt. 25. 1-13. *Thursday*, Be watchful, Rev. 3. 1-6. *Friday*, Walking wisely, Eph. 5. 6-21. *Saturday*, True service, Eph. 6. 1-9. *Sunday*, Reward of integrity, Isa. 33. 13-17.

Authorised Version.

37 ¹ Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself,

¹ Matt. 24. 46.

Revised Version.

37 Blessed are those ¹ servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself,

¹ Gr. bond servants.

I. FAITHFUL SERVANTS. VERSES 37-44.

37. Blessed are those servants—The title “blessed” when used by our Lord implied some rare and precious virtue in the one to whom it is given. A rare virtue is rewarded with equally rare honor. **Shall find watching**—With house in readiness, table prepared, and ready to open the door at the first knock of their returning Master. Not idly gazing up into heaven, but faithfully performing daily duty. **Shall gird himself**—This is one of the most extraordi-

Authorized Version.

and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 ² And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

Revised Version.

and make them sit down to meat, and shall

38 come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find *them* so, blessed are those

39 *servants*. ² But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be

² Matt. 24. 43; 1 Thess. 5. 2; 2 Peter 3. 10; Rev. 3. 3; 16. 15.

² Or, *But this ye know*.



"PRAYING IN THE CORNER OF THE STREET."

nary promises of the New Testament. The allusion is to the Eastern custom of a host honoring his distinguished guests by performing some service done on ordinary occasions by servants. In heaven Christ will treat his faithful followers as chosen guests by serving them forever. The disciples must have been reminded of this when he washed their feet (John 13. 4, 5). To sit down to meat—"In the earthly wedding the lord expects to find the table prepared for him by his servants; in the heavenly he prepares the feast."—Abbott.

38. Come in the second watch—The Romans divided the night into four watches: from six to nine, from nine to midnight, from midnight to three, and from three to six. The banquet would not be over before the end of the first watch; in the fourth the day would be breaking. Vigilance, therefore, is needed during the second and third watches, the still, weary hours of the night, when to watch is a task of difficulty and painfulness. The time of our Lord's coming is unknown. Our ignorance of it is a reason why we should maintain readiness. A watchman watches because he knows not what the next hour may bring forth. Better an alert, well-braced, useful Christian life than useless speculation and feverish expectation.

"We are to put on the whole armor of God; and, since we know neither when nor where the adversary may assault us, we are never to put it off. Live and die in harness, using such precautions as some say Cromwell did against the assassin's dagger—his dress concealed a shirt of mail. In the council chamber, at the banquet, in court, as in camp, he wore it always. Let the good man go to his workshop, countingroom, market, the place of business, and scenes of enjoyment, as the peasant of the East to his plow, where fiery Bedouins scour the land, and bullets whistling from the bush may suddenly call him to drop the ox-goad and fly to arms. The sun glances on other iron than the plowshare, a sword hangs at his thigh, and a gun is slung at his back."—Guthrie.

39. What hour the thief would come—Christ changes the metaphor, comparing his coming to that of a thief in the night (Rev. 3. 3; 16. 15). Broken through—Literally, *digged through*, for the walls of Eastern houses are usually of clay. Robbers entered by perforating the walls (Exod. 22. 2). The truth Christ sought to impress was not that we must be forever talking about his second coming or refrain from ordinary business, but that we should be found every moment doing his will.

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Authorized Version.

40 ³ Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 Then Pe'ter said unto him, Lord, speak-est thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 And the Lord said, ⁴ Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall

Revised Version.

40 ³ broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.

41 And Pe'ter said, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?

42 And the Lord said, Who then is ⁴ the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall

* Matt. 24. 44; 25. 13; Mark 13. 33; chap. 21. 34, 36; 1 Thess. 5. 6; 2 Peter 3. 12.—⁴ Matt. 24. .5; 25. 21; 1 Cor. 4. 2.

* Gr. *digged through*.—⁴ Or, *the faithful steward, the wise man whom, etc.*

Illustration 91. A mother goes from home, leaving her two daughters in charge of the household until her return. One attends to the duties of the family, dusts the furniture, mends the clothes, cooks the dinners, and tries to fill the place of the household's absent head. The other sits by the window with her mother's photograph in her hand and looks down the street for her coming. Which of these really watches for the return of her mother?

Illustration 92. Nearly two centuries ago about a thousand of the Vaudois who had taken refuge in Switzerland came to a secret and invincible determination to make their way through all difficulties and repossess themselves of their homes in the Cottian Alps. Opposed by armies of more than ten times their number, threading their way over mighty mountains on which lay deep snows, changing their route a dozen times in order to avoid great dangers, their eyes were at last delighted with the sight of the familiar mountain peaks that told them they were once more near home. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," and the success that crowned their almost superhuman efforts was the reward of a watchfulness that waited during years of silent preparation, and that, once they had started, for six days and nights gave neither sleep nor slumber to the eyes of their leader. The spirit that animated them compelled them to watch. Shall we do less to gain our heavenly home?

40. Be ye therefore ready—One cannot always watch his house; sleep is necessary. But spiritually he can live in a state of constant readiness. This is not the language of an enemy who tries to rob us of our joy, but the counsel of a true friend. Following it we will save ourselves from regret and terror. **An hour when ye think not**—Worldly men provide themselves against the uncertainties of the future. Fire and life insurance companies flourish because of this principle of forethought. God might have arranged that everyone should carry in his own person an indication of the length of his life. He has left this uncertain because, otherwise, men would spend most of life in sin. An able man planned his life thus: From twenty-five to forty he was to make his fortune; from forty to fifty he planned to devote to political life; from fifty to sixty to literary pursuits; from sixty to seventy he was to lead the life of a quiet country gentleman; and from seventy to the end was reserved for religion. But he died shortly after thirty.

Illustration 93. Near the close of the last century there was a day which has been known in history as "the Dark Day," when through New England and the Middle States the sun was obscured without apparent reason, and night came at noon. The Connecticut Legislature was in session, and some of the members, moved with fear, proposed an immediate adjournment. "It is the day of judgment," they said, "and it is not fitting that we should be here." But Colonel Davenport, one of the members, said: "I do not know whether this is the day of judgment or not. But if it be the day of judgment it cannot overtake us at a better place than at the post of duty. Let us light the candles and go on with the business of the House." And then he made his speech on a bill pertaining to fish nets in Long Island Sound.

Illustration 94. At the battle of Bull Run General Imboden remarked to Stonewall Jackson: "General, how is it that you can keep so cool and appear so utterly insensible to danger in such a storm of shell and bullets as rained about you when your hand was hit?" Jackson instantly became grave and reverential in his manner, and answered, in a low tone of great earnestness: "Captain, my religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to be always ready, no matter when it may overtake me." He added, after a pause, looking Imboden full in the face, "Captain, that is the way all men should live, and then all men would be equally brave."

41. Then Peter—A conception of the rewards mentioned in verse 37 deeply impressed the impulsive apostle. Our Lord frequently addressed his disciples in the presence of the multitude.

42. Faithful and wise steward—The steward was a slave promoted for his intelligence

Authorised Version.	Revised Version.
make ruler over his household, to give <i>them</i> <i>their</i> portion of meat in due season?	set over his household, to give them their
43 Blessed <i>is</i> that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.	43 portion of food in due season? Blessed is that ^s servant, whom his lord when he com-
44 ^o Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.	44 eth shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that
^s Matt. 24. 47.	^s Gr. <i>bond servant</i> .

and fidelity. **Ruler over his household**—Indicating considerable authority. **Portion of meat**—“He distributed the allotted portions of food, grain, etc., to the servants, which they cooked for themselves.”—*Watson*. Everything the steward had belonged to his master—the clothes he wore, the food he ate, the home which sheltered him. An account was kept of the goods committed to him, and in time the books would be balanced. This is our relation to God. We breathe his air, bask in his sunshine, tread on his earth. He gives us something in trust for others. **TIME**—Judge of its value by what it cost, its scarcity, and the uses to which it may be put. **INFLUENCE**—By which we must either lift people up or drag them down. **OPPORTUNITY**—He gives the wind, but we must spread the sail. He gives sun and shower, we must plow and plant. So in the spiritual world. His books must be balanced, as well as our own. While all the faithful will enjoy perfect bliss in heaven, some will be accorded special dominion and glory. In the economy of nature the mountain sends its streams into the valley, and the valley sends its creeping fertility up the mountain side. So should we help our fellows.

43. Blessed is that servant—Generally men are advanced in this world according to their merit. Every man who has large business interests is looking for men whom he can safely trust. Their wages will be greater than those of incompetent and unreliable workmen. Exceptional fidelity to God in any position will not go unrewarded. **Shall find so doing**—It will matter very little in what kind of clothing our Lord finds us at his coming, whether we have on our Sunday suits or our Monday overalls, our resurrection robes or our sweeping aprons, provided that we wear the garments of our Saviour's righteousness. We will meet him as gladly when he comes in the kitchen or the shop or the factory as in the church. Let us be doing “the King's work all the dim day long,” and then we shall be ready to meet the King at his coming.

Illustration 95. “Mr. Wesley,” said a gentleman to the founder of Methodism, “what would you do if you knew that you were to die to-morrow at midnight?” “I should do just what I expect to do,” answered the man of God; “I should preach to-morrow morning at B., and meet the leaders. I should preach in the afternoon at F., and ride over to M., where I should preach in the evening. Then I should go to bed and go to sleep, and awake in glory.”

44. Will make him ruler—“The work of the faithful servant does not cease, either after his own removal from his earthly labor, or even after the final consummation of the kingdom. Over and above the joy of the beatific vision, or what is figured to us as the peace of paradise, there will still be a work to be done analogous to that which has been the man's training here, and in it there will be scope for all the faculties and energies that have been thus disciplined and developed.”—*Plumptre*. There will be larger capacities for usefulness, wider fields for service, and new joys constantly experienced. “Each faithful servant shall be over *all* his Master's goods. That promotion shall not be like earthly promotion, wherein the eminence of one excludes that of another, but rather like the diffusion of love, in which the more each has the more there is for all.”—*Alford*.

Illustration 96. “When the king of Sparta advanced against the enemy he had *always* with him some one that had been crowned in the public games of Greece. And they tell us that a Lacedæmonian, when large sums were offered him on condition that he would not enter the Olympic lists, refused them. Having with much difficulty thrown his antagonist, one put this question to him, ‘Spartan, what will you get by this victory?’ He answered, with a smile, ‘I shall have the honor to fight foremost in the ranks before my prince.’”—*Plutarch*.

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Authorized Version.

45 ⁶ But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will ^a cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 And ⁷ that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48 ⁸ But he that knew not, and did commit

Revised Version.

45 he hath. But if that ⁶ servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that ⁶ servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall ⁷ cut him asunder, and appoint

46 his portion with the unfaithful. And that ⁶ servant, which knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes;

47 but he that knew not, and did things worthy

^a Matt. 24, 48.—^a Or, cut him off. Matt. 24, 51.—⁷ Num. 15, 30; Deut. 25, 2; John 9, 41; 15, 22; Acts 17, 30; James 4, 17.—⁸ Lev. 24, 17; 1 Tim. 1, 18.

⁶ Gr., bond servant.—⁷ Or, severely scourge him.

II. WICKED SERVANTS. VERSES 45-48.

45. Say in his heart—Thinking is just inward speaking. **My lord delayeth his coming**—"The expression denotes an internal mocking frivolity."—*Lange*. A secret infidelity is nourished as to whether any account will be called for, or whether his Master will ever return. **Beat the menservants and maidens**—As the corrupted Roman Church beat, imprisoned, and burned Christ's servants in Reformation times. **Drink, and to be drunken**—He not only oppresses faithful and defenseless fellow-servants, but peoples the dwelling committed to his charge with a vile rabble, making it a scene of dissolute revelry. Self-gratification and severity to others often go hand in hand.

Illustration 97. A patient was arguing with his doctor on the necessity of his taking a stimulant; he urged that he was weak and needed it. Said he, "But, doctor, I must have some kind of a stimulant; I'm cold, and it warms me." "Precisely," came the doctor's crusty answer: "see here; this stick is cold"—taking up a piece of wood from the box beside the hearth and tossing it into the fire. "Now it is warm, but is the stick benefited?" The sick man watched the wood first send out little puffs of smoke, and then burst into a flame, and replied, "Of course not; it is burning." "And so you are when you warm yourself with alcohol; you are literally burning up the delicate tissues of your stomach and brain."

Illustration 98. *Mr. George W. Batn*, the temperance orator, says: "You often hear the remark that 'There is no harm in a glass of wine *per se*.' *Per se* means by itself. Certainly there is no harm in a glass of wine by itself. Place a glass of wine by itself and it remains there, and it is *per se*, and it harms no one. But if you take it from the shelf and turn it inside a man, then it is no longer *per se*."

46. The lord . . . will come—The wickedness of some professing Christians will not hinder His coming. **When he is not aware**—The life of profligacy will have a rude awaking, a bitter sequel. **Cut him in sunder**—A revolting and barbaric form of death practiced among the Hebrews and other nations of antiquity (Heb. 11, 37). This extreme bodily torment images the terrible inflictions of God's wrath upon unfaithful servants. **Will appoint**—Judgment cannot be evaded. **His portion**—He goes where he belongs. Our delights prophesy our destiny.

Illustration 99. Tell the story, from the Second Part of "Pilgrim's Progress," of the two men who lay down to sleep for a little while in an arbor on the Enchanted Ground (that is, the Region of Inglorious Ease), and could never be waked again. The name of the one was Heedless; that of the other, Overbold.

47. Knew his lord's will—Either actually, from received information, or virtually, because the information was within his reach. **Prepared not himself**—For his Lord's return to judgment. **Beaten with many stripes**—On the principle that responsibility is according to the knowledge of the criminal. There are, therefore, degrees of punishment as well as grades of glory.

48. But he that knew not—That is, knew but *partially*, for *some* knowledge is implied

Authorized Version.

things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Revised Version.

of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.

in the name "servant" of Christ, and his being liable to punishment at all. The case supposed is that of one who did what he knew, without special revelation, by the light of common sense and duty, to be contrary to his duty as a servant. **Shall be beaten**—He is beaten because he sinned against light; he is less beaten because he had less light. **Much . . . given . . . much required**—The universal law lying at the bottom of the principles just laid down. **Men**—"This is the principle on which men judicially act. It accords with universal conscience. If men universally knew the principle it is right that they should be judged as knowing it."—*Whedon*. Large measures of knowledge are a great stewardship. It is an awful mercy to be greatly exalted—to be highly favored above other men.

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL WE DO, AND FOR ALL THAT WE MIGHT DO. The degraded drunkard whose will is paralyzed is still responsible for his inebriety; for when he took to drink he took to all that drink involved.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

When Lafayette was in America he was addressed as "the citizen of two worlds." Every disciple is a citizen not only of the earthly world, but also of the world spiritual and heavenly, where Christ is the King. Notice the **Traits of the True Servant** as shown here.

I. He is watchful. Verses 37-40. His Lord is absent on a journey, but may appear at the door any moment, and he is watching with eager hope and expectancy for his return. Whatever may be the manner of our Lord's coming, come he will, and his Church should ever be in the attitude of preparation for his appearing.

II. He is faithful. Verses 41, 42. That is, he does not make his Master's absence an opportunity for neglect, but for industry. He cares for his trust, fulfills each task "as under the great Taskmaster's eye." He ever asks, "What would my Lord desire me to do?" and strives to do it.

III. He is wise. Verses 42-44. There are two kinds of work, that of the slave, and that of the son; that of the convict, and that of the loyal freeman; that of the drudge, and that of the skillful workman. The wise servant employs his thought no less than his hand in the interest of his Master's cause. Christ's work needs all the wisdom, no less than all the industry, of his servants.

IV. He is considerate. Verses 45-48. He looks not only on his own things, but also on the things of others (Phil. 2. 4). He takes Christ as his example, who sought not his own

ease and glory, but emptied himself that he might save others (Phil. 2. 5-8). The world's conception of success is that of the conqueror, who places other men under his feet; the Gospel ideal is that of Christ, who descended that he might enable others to rise.

V. He is temperate. Verse 45. He is not found among the pleasure seekers and the drunkards; but he keeps his body under, holding every appetite and lust and passion and temper under the sway of God's will.

SELF-CONTROL

IN SPITE OF

TEMPTATIONS, | DOUBTS,
TRIALS, | DISCOURAGEMENTS.WAIT.
OR.
ATCH.

THE LORD WILL COME.

"BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT."

VI. **He is rewarded.** Verses 37, 42. He has his present reward in the position which he holds among his fellow-workers; for he who is wise, watchful, faithful, temperate, considerate, comes by natural law to rule. And he will have his abundant reward hereafter, when he shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb.



REVIEW OF THE FIRST QUARTER.—MARCH 29.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.—Luke 12. 8.

LESSON HYMN.—

We may not climb the heavenly steeps To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we search the lowest deeps, For him no depths can drown.
But warm, sweet, tender, even yet A present help is he;
And faith has yet its Olivet, And love its Galilee.
O Lord and Master of us all, Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call, We test our lives by thine!

—Whittier.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (March 23), The boyhood of Jesus, Luke 2. 40-52. *Tuesday*, Early ministry of Jesus, Luke 4. 14-22. *Wednesday*, The power of Jesus, Luke 5. 17-26. *Thursday*, Jesus, the great helper, Luke 7. 1-16. *Friday*, Faith encouraged, Luke 8. 41-56. *Saturday*, Jesus, the Messiah, Luke 9. 18-27. *Sunday*, True love to one's neighbor, Luke 10. 25-37.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

In the preparation of a review it is desirable to find first of all one theme that will unite all the lessons of the Quarter, and then to notice how that theme is presented in each lesson. We observe that in all these lessons Christ is the central subject, and, moreover, that in each

lesson Christ is shown as the bringer of some blessing to men.

We may therefore take as the common topic of all these lessons **Christ the Door**, and we find in each lesson some one benefit that Christ, as the door, opens to his disciples.

LESSON I. The Forerunner of Christ. John the Baptist is the theme of this lesson, but he appears as the herald of one foretold in prophecy. Christ therefore is the door to **Promise**, since through him all the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled.

LESSON II. The Boy Jesus. Here he is shown to us as the youth growing up to his mission, the door to **Example** in character; a pure, thoughtful, obedient youth, beloved of God and popular among his companions, the pattern to all the young.

JESUS THE SON OF MAN		
ANNOUNCED		
TO JEWS.		TO ALL.
GROWING.		
WISDOM.		FAVOR.
STATURE.		
WORKING.		
WORDS OF		WORKS OF
POWER.		
HELPING.		
HEALTH TO SICK.		LIFE TO DEAD.
TEACHING.		
BE DOERS.		BE PRAYERFUL.
BE WATCHFUL.		
CONFESS HIM AND BE RECEIVED.		

FIRST QUARTERLY REVIEW.

LESSON III. The Ministry of John the Baptist. The lesson points to John the Baptist, but John points to Jesus as the coming One who shall baptize with the Holy Ghost. We find Christ here the door to **Holiness**, by his cleansing power and his divine endowment.

LESSON IV. The Early Ministry of Jesus. Here the Saviour is represented as proclaiming "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." He came as the door to **Freedom**, especially to those who were under the thralldom of a rigid law then, and to those who are in the chains of sin now. The Gospel of Christ is the true proclamation of emancipation.

LESSON V. The Power of Jesus. The great gift of Jesus to men is not the healing of disease, but the taking away of sin. His miracles were his lesser works, the pardon of sins is his greatest work, needed by every soul. He is the door to **Forgiveness**.

LESSON VI. The Sermon on the Mount. Only the conclusion of this discourse is given in the lesson, but viewing it as a whole we find that in it Jesus speaks to the sorrowing, the poor, the persecuted, with words of consolation. He is therefore the door of **Comfort**.

LESSON VII. The Great Helper. The centurion's faith is held up as an example by Christ. While the Saviour's own people could see in Jesus only a teacher and a worker of miracles this Gentile saw in him the King of the world spiritual, having angels and principalities under him. Christ, then, is the door to **Faith**.

LESSON VIII. Faith Encouraged. "She is not dead," said Jesus, as he looked upon the corpse of the young girl. He would teach not only her parents, but all the world, that there is no death; that death is only the entrance to immortality. Thus Christ becomes the door to **Life**.

LESSON IX. Jesus the Messiah. As he who is ashamed of Christ and his words will come to eternal shame hereafter, so he who is willing to confess Christ here will receive eternal glory. Thus Christ is the door to **Honor**.

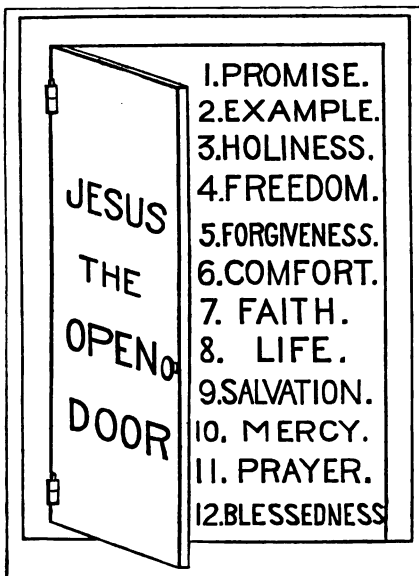
LESSON X. True Love to One's Neighbor. The story of the Good Samaritan was intended to show that the obligation of mercy and help to those in need rests upon every man. When all men are followers of Jesus Christ, then every man will be a Good Samaritan, doing deeds of love. Christ, then, is the door to **Mercy**. His grace opens the heart of every one that receives it.

LESSON XI. Teaching About Prayer. Jesus is the door of **Prayer**. He shows us the way to the Father, he gives us an example in prayer, and promises to us an abundant answer. Through him we have our access to God.

LESSON XII. Faithful and Unfaithful Servants. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord shall find watching." Such a servant shall find Christ the door to eternal **Blessedness**.

These are but a few of the many privileges in the Gospel to which Christ opens the way.

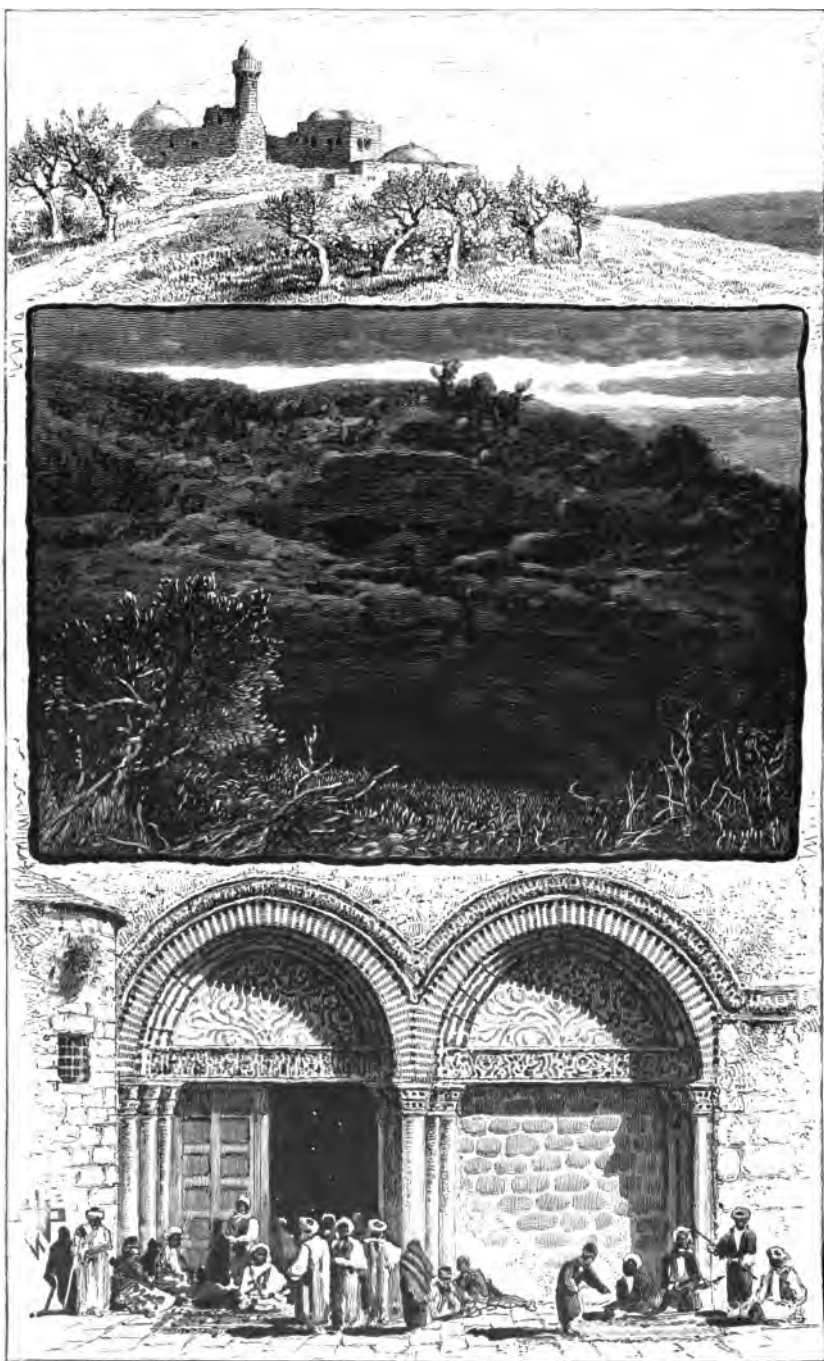
We present another Blackboard outline, on page 106, which gives the ruling thoughts of the Quarter's lessons in a somewhat different form. The theme is **Jesus, the Son of Man**, which is the view of Christ given in Saint Luke's gospel.



les 6 trucking -

les 7 trucking

les 2 - 10 - 11 trucking -



1. TRADITIONAL SCENE OF THE ASCENSION. 2. ONE OF THE TRADITIONAL SCENES OF THE CRUCIFIXION. 3. TRADITIONAL SCENE OF THE RESURRECTION—GATE OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER.

SECOND QUARTER.

LESSON I.—APRIL 5.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.—LUKE 24. 1-12.

[Easter Lesson.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—He is not here, but is risen.—Luke 24. 6.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Sunday, April 9, A. D. 30.

PLACE.—The tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (hewn out of the solid rock), in a garden at Golgotha (Calvary), just outside the wall of Jerusalem.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 28. 1-15; Mark 16. 1-8; John 20. 1-18.

BASIS OF FACT.—The reality of Christ's resurrection is based on the fact of his actual death. Proof of the latter is as follows: 1. His crucifiers were men who would make sure of their work. 2. Pilate had the body officially examined. 3. The soldier's spear pierced his side. 4. The dead body was placed in Joseph's new tomb. 5. The only entrance to the tomb was closed by a huge stone securely sealed. 6. A Roman guard of sixty soldiers kept strict watch over the tomb. 7. The precautions were taken, not by his friends, but by his enemies.

THE ORDER OF EVENTS.—We have reached Easter Sunday, and our attention is again directed to the glorious climax of the greatest of tragedies. On the evening of his death (Friday) our Lord's body was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in his new rock-hewn tomb. On the next day (the Hebrew Sabbath, our Saturday), by Pilate's authority the stone door of the sepulcher was sealed and a guard of soldiers placed about it. It has been conjectured that this doorway was not the outer entrance, but the passageway between the outer and inner chambers of the tomb. A circular stone in a groove was rolled across this doorway to close it, and must be rolled back before anyone could enter. For thirty hours Pilate's soldiers had watched the tomb, while all Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread, and the disciples of Jesus wept in secret over the ruin of their hopes. In the dawn of the following day (Sunday) an earthquake rent the tomb asunder, the soldiers fell to the ground in terror, and an angel heralded the resurrection of our Lord. Meanwhile through the morning twilight crept a little group of women to the sepulcher, bearing spices and balm for the further anointing of the body. They saw with terror that the stone was rolled away and that the tomb was empty. Mary Magdalene apparently concluded in haste that the Lord's body had been stolen, and ran for Peter and John, thus separating herself from the rest of the women. They came closer to the sepulcher, saw the angels, then departed to tell the disciples. While they were gone still another detachment of disciples came; Peter and John ran to the sepulcher, and, finding it empty, returned to their homes. Meanwhile Mary Magdalene, having followed them to the sepulcher, stands outside weeping, and Jesus appears to her and gives her a message to the other disciples, after which all the women have a glimpse of Jesus.

THE TEN RECORDED APPEARANCES OF THE RISEN CHRIST.—1. To Mary Magdalene (John 20. 11-17; Mark 16. 9). 2. To the women returning from the sepulcher (Matt. 28. 9, 10). 3. To Peter (Luke 24. 34; 1 Cor. 15. 5). 4. To the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24. 13-35; Mark 16. 12, 13). 5. To ten disciples and others, Thomas, however, being absent (Luke 24. 36-49; John 20. 19-23; Mark 16. 14). (These first five appearances were all on the day he rose from the dead.) 6. To the eleven apostles; the incredulity of Thomas removed (John 20. 26-29). 7. To seven apostles at the Lake of Galilee (John 21.

1-24). 8. To eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee, which is generally regarded as being identical with the appearance to five hundred at once (Matt. 28. 16-20; Mark 16. 15-18; 1 Cor. 15. 6). 9. To James, the Lord's brother (1 Cor. 15. 7). 10. Immediately before the ascension (Luke 24. 50, 51; Acts 1. 6-9). These are all the appearances of which we have record, but Paul intimates that there were others known to him.

WHAT THE RESURRECTION TEACHES.—1. It is the crowning proof of our Lord's divinity. Armed guards and sealed gravestones in vain oppose Omnipotence. This is the supreme test which he proposed as proof that he was God. No ordinary human soul could return and reanimate the body it forsook at death. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." 2. It brought immortality to light. The earth and the apple had been here for ages before Newton came. The loosened apples had always sought the earth; man had observed them and knew the fact, but he made nothing of it until one day Newton came and said, "Lo, it is gravitation," and so out of the old conditions revealed a new truth to the world. Just so with the belief in immortality. Man's deep cravings, his unused power, his dissatisfaction, God's unfinished plan, the interrupted lives, were elements out of which to make a belief in immortality. But prior to Christ's resurrection the belief was not firm. When he arose men united these elements in a clear, compact, intelligible faith in a resurrection of soul and body. 3. It became the great lifting power of a new era for the race. Before the advent the world had exhausted its resources in the effort to stem the tide of corruption. Imperial Rome had done its best, and only added a new and crushing weight to the world's burden. Who should rule the rulers and guard the guards? Philosophy chanted a dirge over the hopeless problem. But Christ rose to make the power by which he lived the regenerator of perishing humanity. Men went forth to proclaim that there was a risen King of men in the world behind the veil, bending all the energy of heaven to make the purity of the Gospel victorious over the sin and sorrow of the world. This is the secret of a revived society and the vital spring of all modern progress.

LESSON HYMN.—

The Lord is risen indeed; The grave hath lost its prey;
With him shall rise the ransomed seed, To reign in endless day.
The Lord is risen indeed; He lives, to die no more;
He lives, his people's cause to plead, Whose curse and shame he bore.
The Lord is risen indeed; Attending angels, hear!
Up to the courts of heaven, with speed, The joyful tidings bear.—*Thomas Kelly.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (March 30), The Resurrection of Christ, Luke 24. 1-12. *Tuesday*, Appearance to Mary, John 20. 11-18. *Wednesday*, Testimony of witnesses, 1 Cor. 15. 1-11. *Thursday*, The pledge of future life, 1 Cor. 15. 12-22. *Friday* (Good Friday), Jesus crucified, John 19. 16-24. *Saturday*, Vain human efforts, Matt. 27. 57-66. *Sunday* (Easter), "He is risen," Matt. 28. 1-15.

Authorized Version.

1 Now ¹upon the first day of the week,
very early in the morning, they came unto the

Revised Version.

1 But on the first day of the week, at early
dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing

¹ Matt. 28. 1; Mark 16. 1; John 20. 1.

I. THE SEPULCHER. VERSES 1-3.

1. **First day**—The Jewish Sabbath was our Saturday, and, like all their days, began and ended at sundown. **Very early**—"In the deep dawn;" "while it was yet dark." Read all the accounts of the resurrection. The sun began to rise before they reached the tomb. Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary"—mother of James the Less—watched the burial on Friday afternoon; they stayed at home during the long and dreary Sabbath (our Saturday), and immediately thereafter prepared to embalm the body. They may have purchased other spices,

APRIL 5, 1896. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. LUKE 24. 1-12.

Authorized Version.
sepulcher, ² bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

² ³ And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher.

³ ⁴ And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Je'sus.

Revised Version.

2 the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the 3 tomb. And they entered in, and found not

² Chap. 23. 56.—³ Matt. 28. 2; Mark 16. 4.—⁴ Ver. 23; Mark 16. 5.

as *Dr. Plumptre* suggests, on Saturday evening after the Sabbath was ended, and at the earliest hour Sunday morning they started on their mournful journey. **Came unto the sepulcher**—The company consisted of at least five. See verse 10. Love and sorrow woke the women early. They would lose no time in fulfilling affection's task. **Bringing the spices**—Myrrh, aloes, and unguents preventive of putrefaction. These had been prepared on Friday evening.

2. Found the stone rolled away—The stone was round, like a large millstone, and large enough to cover an aperture of three or four feet in height and two to three in breadth. The resurrection had taken place before the angel rolled away the stone. This was done to enable the disciples to inspect the empty tomb. "On their way they had considered how they should get over this difficulty, since the stone was 'very great' (Mark 16. 4). From Mark's expression 'looking up' we infer that the tomb was slightly elevated; and from John's 'lifted,' that the first aperture of the tomb was horizontal. Matthew also tells us of the angel and of the earthquake (Matt. 28. 2-4)."—*Farrar*.



AT THE TRADITIONAL SEPULCHER OF OUR LORD.

Illustration 100. "They found the stone rolled away." Suppose I start for Jerusalem, and my banker, instead of giving me money, hands me some papers which he says will take me to London, and there they can be exchanged for money which will take me to Paris, and there again I shall find more money awaiting me; and suppose, instead of taking this banker at his word, I say, "How do I know that these slips of paper will bring me food and transportation and comfort? I shall starve in that strange land." You would call me a fool for such anxiety. Trust the Lord as you trust your banker. Anxiety is distrust.

3. And they entered in—There was probably a vestibule or outer cave from which all the interior of the sepulcher could be seen. **Found not the body**—The sight of the empty grave was no joy to the weeping eyes that first saw it in the twilight, but for us it is flooded with the sunshine of hope and comfort.

Illustration 101. The cloisters of old San Marco in Florence were dark, gloomy, and depressing; they were transformed into chambers of delight by the magic pencil of Fra Angelico, who covered the gloomy walls and ceilings with miracles of beauty that have gladdened the hearts and charmed the eyes of men for three hundred years. O, the dark, forbidding sepulcher! Not the glowing pencil of human art, not the cunning chisel of worldly wisdom, not the rainbow colors of poetry,

Authorized Version.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, ⁵ behold, two men stood by them in shining garments :

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye ^a the living among the dead ?

Revised Version.

4 the body ¹ of the Lord Je'sus. And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in ⁵ dazzling apparel: and as they were afrighted, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek

^a John 20. 12; Acts 1. 10. — ^a Or, him that liveth.

¹ Some ancient authorities omit of the Lord Jesus.

can ever give glory to its gloom, or work a beauty on its gates and walls to charm our fears and bid our sorrows cease. But One has visited the darkness, and left lingering behind him there "the brightness of his presence and the glory of his waking smile." Upon the tomb's dark walls bereavement reads: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

II. THE MESSENGERS. VERSES 4-8.



A STONE AT THE DOOR OF A SEPULCHER.

4. They were much perplexed—Literally, "utterly at a loss." They feared the worst—their Lord's sepulcher violated, his holy body borne away to be exposed to shame and indignities. **Two men stood by them**—They are spoken of as men, since their appearance to the women was in human form. Matthew and Mark mention one angel, who rolled away the stone and sat upon it. It is not certain that Luke refers to the same visit to the tomb.

"Angels appear to have the power to assume different forms at will; to invest themselves with apparent habiliments and withdraw from sight as they please." — *Whedon*. Their presence there indicates Christ's lordship over

them. **In shining garments**—Literally, "flashing as with lightning;" emblem of heaven's purity.

Illustration 102.

Often in our sorrow Angels may be seen,
When we look to-morrow Where our griefs had been;
And the angels holy Whisper us and say,
Lo! the Meek and Lowly Plucked the sting away.

5. They were afraid—They would naturally be alarmed at being so near such divine powers, and also lest they had lost their Master. **Bowed down their faces to the earth**—A form of salutation used among the orientals before a superior. **They said unto them**—"Sudden joy might harm, so Christ will not appear without sending messengers to prepare his way. He lets the blessedness trickle in drops rather than burst in a shower. He will not show himself at once, but first the empty grave and then the angel's message shall gently make their hearts ready for the final wonder."—*Maclaren*. **Why seek ye the living among**

APRIL 5, 1896. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. LUKE 24. 1-12.

Authorized Version.

6 He is not here, but is risen: ⁶remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Gal'i-lee,

7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And ⁷they remembered his words,
9 ⁸And returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

⁶ Matt. 16. 91; 17. 23; Mark 8. 31; 9. 31; chap. 9. 22.—⁷ John 9. 22.—⁸ Matt. 28. 8; Mark 16. 10.

Revised Version.

6 ye ⁶the living among the dead? ⁷He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Gal'i-lee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words,
9 and returned ⁸from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the

⁶ Gr. him that liveth.—⁷ Some ancient authorities omit He is not here, but is risen.—⁸ Some ancient authorities omit from the tomb.

the dead—Neither in the grave nor in the dying institutions of Jewry was Christ henceforth to be found; “the living One” is a fit title for our deathless Redeemer.

6. He is not here—As they could see if they looked closely into the dark cave. **Risen**—That one word conquers death, dries tears, calms grief, widens our outlook, and makes earth our nursery and heaven our home. **Remember how he spake unto you**—The prophecies of the passion which the women had forgotten were known to the angels. The words our Master speaks need experience to interpret them. Till we grow up to them they lie neglected. Then they flash into new meaning, and we wonder that we ever forgot them. **When he was yet in Galilee**—To these Galilean women such a reminder would be peculiarly fitting. For prophecies uttered during the ministry in Galilee see Matt. 17. 23; Luke 18. 33; John 11. 25.

7. Saying, The Son of man—That the women in their affrighted and excited state should not mistake their meaning, the angels cite the saying referred to. It was probably originally addressed to these very women, but they had either forgotten it or attached to the words a symbolic meaning.

Illustration 103. When the Jewish rulers who had sworn away the life of Jesus heard first of his resurrection they said to the witnesses, “Ye intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” The resurrection of Jesus to them had no other meaning than vengeance. They reasoned, “If he whom we slew is exalted, woe unto us.” But to these very men the apostles preached pardon. They proclaimed that Jesus is exalted for the purpose of showing mercy to his murderers. Water is exalted into the heavens in order that it may give rain upon the earth—it is exalted to give. Now that Christ is exalted, and his enemies are in his power, instead of taking vengeance he gives remission of sins.

8. Remembered his words—These particular words in respect to his rising again.

FIVE DIRECT LESSONS FOR US.—1. God has many ways and means to comfort the terrified.
2. To forget Christ’s word brings trouble. 3. Sorrow brings angels that we never saw in joy.
4. It is true of all the dead in Christ, they are not in the grave, but risen to a fuller, nobler, higher life. 5. The empty tomb has some meaning for us also.

Illustration 104. “I hold in my hand a piece of dull, black, unsightly charcoal. You scientific men who say that resurrection is impossible, look at it and then at this diamond. You yourself tell me they are the same substance—that the charcoal is simply the carbon in its humiliation, and the diamond is simply carbon in its glory. What a difference between the two—this so dull, so black, so dead; that so bright and sparkling as it corruscates in the sunlight! If nature can transform the charcoal into a diamond, do you not believe that Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life, can transform your dead body so that it will become radiant and glorious like his own body? That is what he says he will do.”—A. J. Gordon.

III. THE DISCIPLES. VERSES 9-12.

9. Told all these things—This company returned from the tomb to the city, a short walk of fifteen or twenty minutes, and reported to the eleven and the other disciples in Jerusalem all that they had seen and heard. From the narrative in John it is probable that the Magdalene ran at once to John and Peter to tell them that the stone had been rolled away, and that she had not, therefore, seen the angels who first appeared.

Authorized Version.

10 It was Ma'ry Mag-da-le'ne, and ⁹Jo-an'na, and Ma'ry the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 ¹⁰ And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 ¹¹ Then arose Pe'ter, and ran unto the sepulcher; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

Revised Version.

10 rest. Now they were Ma'ry Mag-da-le'ne, and Jo-an'na, and Ma'ry the mother of James: and the other women with them 11 told these things unto the apostles. And these words appeared in their sight as idle 12 talk; and they disbelieved them. ⁹ But Pe'ter arose, and ran unto the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths by themselves; and he ⁸ departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass.

⁸ Chap. 8. 3. —¹⁰ Mark 16. 11; ver. 25. —¹¹ John 20. 2, 6.

⁸ Some ancient authorities omit ver. 12. —⁹ Or, departed, wondering with himself.

10. Mary Magdalene—Mary of Magdala. Out of her Jesus had cast seven demons. **Joanna**—She was the wife of Herod's treasurer, or of the head of his household (Luke 8. 3). **Mary**—Mother of James the Less, and supposed to have been a sister of the mother of Jesus.



A TOMB NEAR THE "PLACE OF A SKULL."

11. As idle tales—Nonsense and superstitious gossip; crazy talk. Flat disbelief—and that declared in rude terms which must have stabbed the women like a knife—was the attitude of all. **Believed them not**—But just because they did not unreasonably believe we may the more surely believe.

Illustration 105. If Christianity be likened to an arch, then the resurrection of Christ is the keystone. Take out the keystone, and the arch must fall. It is the crown and strength of the structure. Take out of Christianity the resurrection of Christ, and all is lost. Paul says, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. They also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

12. Then arose Peter—See John 20. 3-10. John was with him, but the characteristic episodes of the visit all hinged on Peter's actions. "Then" should be "But," and it means that, in contrast with most of the other disciples, Peter was ready to believe. That Peter and John ran indicates the intense earnestness of this hour. No emergency so great has ever confronted human hearts. **The linen clothes**—Jesus was probably not incased in a coffin, but wrapped in a winding sheet. **Laid by themselves**—An important incident, tending to disprove the Jewish theory of the theft of the body. **Wondering**—The crucifixion had stunned these disciples; and yet they should have understood. Compare Luke 9. 43-45; John 2. 18-22; 6. 61-64; 10. 17, 18; 13. 31; Matt. 12. 38-42; 16. 13-27; 17. 1-9; Mark 10. 32-34.

Illustration 106. A curious dissatisfaction and distress took possession of our forefathers when they had borne their conquering arms to the limits of Europe and had no new realms to subdue. Then began to haunt their thoughts visions of a new world beyond the weary waste of waters. For ages the vision was fruitless. The land which they thought they saw resolved itself into mists or sunset clouds. In the fullness of time the curtain lifted and the new world shone beyond the Atlan-

tic, fair as Canaan shone to the pilgrims of the wilderness. So the resurrection reveals the better country for which all human aspiration has earnestly craved.

Illustration 107. In the last century Lord Lyttleton and his friend Gilbert West, a brother of the great painter, concerted together, being unbelievers in the Bible as a revelation, that each should select some Bible topic, and after thorough study prepare a small treatise upon it, for the purpose of showing the absurdity of the Christian claims. West chose the resurrection of Christ, and Lyttleton the conversion of Paul. When they met some time afterward each expected to surprise and grieve the other by confessing that his researches had led him to believe in Christianity and the Bible, and each published a short treatise on the subject to that effect.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

I. The Tomb. Our first picture is of the sealed sepulcher in the garden. Try to form a conception of what the world would be to-day if the seal had remained unbroken and Jesus had never risen. We should see no church spires rising in the villages, no cathedral towers above the city roofs, no Bibles in the hands of aged saints, no Christian ministers by the bedside of the dying, no Christian mottoes on the monuments of the dead. Perhaps the very name of Jesus would have been unknown.

II. The Visit. Our next picture is that of a little company of sorrowful women on their way to the tomb, laden with fragrant spices for anointing the body. Notice the day, Sunday morning after the passover; the first Easter Sunday. Show how every Sunday, and especially one Sunday in the year, keeps this in memory. What traits do we find in these women?

III. The Door. They expected to find it shut, and were anxious; but it was open—a type of the grave ever since that day. How came it open? What had taken place? Describe the watch, the earthquake, the resurrection. A recent painting on a memorial window represents the door open, the angels standing by as guards, and the Saviour walking out with calm and kingly bearing; not bursting forth from the tomb.



THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER.

IV. The Message. Compare the accounts, and notice the testimony of the angels: 1. A prophetic Saviour. 2. A crucified Saviour. 3. A buried Saviour. 4. A living Saviour. The great central fact of Christian teaching is that Jesus is not a dead man, like Socrates, or Paul, or Shakespeare, but a living personality. If he is dead, then is our faith vain, his name carries no power. But he lives, and his Church has a living Head.

V. The Report. Notice how the story of the angels was received by the apostles.

DEATH'S DEFEAT.

JESUS
IN DEATH'S DOMAIN | BREAKS THE BONDS
RISES TO EIGN.

THE FIRST FRUITS OF THEM
THAT SLEPT.

Compare John 20, and narrate the visit of Peter and John. Why did not John enter at once into the tomb? Which of these two disciples was the first to believe that their Master had risen from the dead?

VI. In this lesson find examples: 1. Of love. 2. Of fidelity. 3. Of courage. 4. Of faith.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

The standard lives of Jesus, as follows: *Edersheim*, ii, 630-637; *Pressensé*, 473-477; *Far-rar*, ii, 425-437; *Geikie*, ii, 547-555. Spices for the body, *Geikie*, "Holy Land," i, 138, 139. Preparation for burial, *Freeman*, "Handbook of Bible Manners and Customs," 822. Jewish sepulchers, *Andrews*, 558-567; *Stapfer*, 168, 169; *Thomson*, ii, 492-494. Angels in human form, *Tuck*, 427, 428; *Edersheim*, i, 138-143. The hour of Jesus's resurrection, *Andrews*, 586, 587. Sermons: *Beecher*, "The Garden and the Sepulcher;" *Spurgeon*, "The Tomb of Jesus;" *Maclaren*, "The Living Dead;" *Krummacher*, "The Empty Grave."



LINKS CONNECTING LESSON XII WITH LESSON II.

With Lesson II we again take up the regular course of Lessons on the Life of Christ. Our last selection was taken from the middle of Luke 12, which chapter is filled with warnings against the spirit of Pharisaism. Between that chapter and this lesson come the following: 1. The Galleians slain by Pilate (Luke 13. 1-9). 2. The woman healed on the Sabbath (Luke 13. 10-21). 3. The question whether few are saved (Luke 13. 22-30). 4. Reply to the warning against Herod (Luke 13. 31-35). 5. Discourse at a chief Pharisee's table (Luke 14. 1-14). The words of Lesson II were spoken at this feast.



LESSON II.—APRIL 12.

PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER.—LUKE 14. 15-24.

[Read Luke 14.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Come; for all things are now ready.—Luke 14. 17.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—A Sabbath day in December, A. D. 29.

PLACE.—In the vicinity of Bethabara, beyond Jordan (Perea), where Jesus had been baptized by John. The greatest of the parables were all spoken in Perea.

PARALLEL PASSAGE.—There is none; but a corresponding story is that of the Marriage Feast, told three or four months later than this, and given in Matt. 22. 1-14.

ENVIRONMENTS OF THE LESSON.—Jesus was dining with a Pharisee. Surrounded by the splendor of an oriental feast, he took his surroundings as a text, uttered a parable about seeking the best places at table, gave instruction about making feasts for the poor, and then spoke this parable.

LESSON HYMN.—

"All things are ready," come, Come to the supper spread;

Come, rich and poor, come, old and young, Come, and be richly fed.

"All things are ready," come, The invitation's given,

Through Him who now in glory sits At God's right hand in heaven.

"All things are ready," come, The door is open wide;

O feast upon the love of God, For Christ, his Son, has died.—*Albert Midland.*

HOME READINGS.—Monday (April 6), Parable of the Great Supper, Luke 14. 15-24.

APRIL 12, 1896. PARABLE OF GREAT SUPPER. LUKE 14. 15-24.

Tuesday, The marriage feast, Matt. 22. 1-14. *Wednesday*, Wisdom's invitation, Prov. 9. 1-11. *Thursday*, Sin of refusing, Prov. 1. 20-33. *Friday*, Free invitation, Isa. 55. 1-7. *Saturday*, The truth rejected, Acts 18. 42-52. *Sunday*, The supper of the Lamb, Rev. 19. 4-10.

Authorized Version.

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, ¹ Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 ² Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many :

Revised Version.

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in

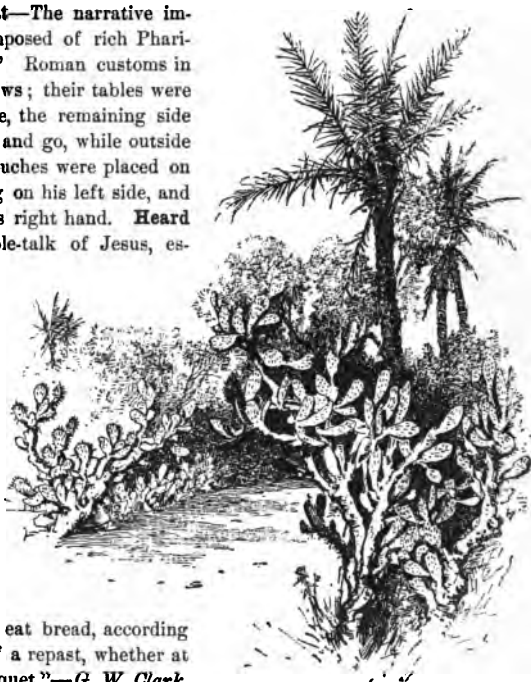
16 the kingdom of God. But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper ;

¹ Rev. 19. 9. — ² Matt. 22. 2.

I. INVITATION. VERSES 15-17.

15. One of them that sat at meat—The narrative implies that the company was largely composed of rich Pharisees. They reclined rather than "sat." Roman customs in dining prevailed among the wealthier Jews ; their tables were ranged around three sides of a square, the remaining side being left open for the waiters to come and go, while outside the tables, and endwise toward them, couches were placed on which the guests reclined, each leaning on his left side, and taking the food from the table with his right hand. **Heard these things**—Heard the brilliant table-talk of Jesus, especially the promise of reward to be given in the Messianic kingdom to those who with generosity feasted their poor neighbors. **Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God**—The speaker probably looked forward to the banquets which Jesus would give when enthroned at Jerusalem. In spite of our Lord's repeated explanations he was constantly regarded by the populace as a "pretender" to the Hebrew crown. It was like saying, How fortunate will he be who sees the Gentiles expelled and our political liberty restored ! "To eat bread, according to a Hebrew idiom, means to partake of a repast, whether at an ordinary meal or at a sumptuous banquet."—*G. W. Clark*. In Christ's day the phrase "kingdom of God" had a thoroughly secular meaning—at least when spoken by the average Jew. The remark was probably more polite than sincere. "So far as it was sincere it corresponds to the universal feeling of even irreligious men, that it will be a blessed thing to be a child of God in the future heavenly state."—*Abbott*.

16. Said he unto him—Our Lord would teach his fellow-guest that those whom he had justly called "blessed" did not appreciate the blessing, and would consequently lose it. **A certain man**—The Rabbi's new sentence promises some fresh incident, such as one expects to find in his morning newspaper in these days ; it rivets attention. We who study the completed



"HIGHWAYS AND HEDGES."

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
17 And ³ sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.	17 and he bade many: and he sent forth his ¹ servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are
³ Prov. 9. 2, 5.	¹ Gr. <i>bond servant</i> .

story in the light of our Lord's completed teachings know that this "certain man" represents God, who is the Fount of every blessing which humanity enjoys; and that the "great supper"—like the "feast of fat things" in Isa. 25. 6—represents the blessings of the Gospel dispensation. See below. **A great supper**—"The people of the East take but two regular meals a day—a hearty breakfast early in the morning and the principal meal at nightfall. Rich people sometimes eat a regular meal at noon, but more commonly take light luncheon then. The evening meal is that to which guests are usually invited. It would have been better to have translated the word 'supper' *dinner*."—*Van Lennep*. Man needs "dinners" for his mind and soul as well as for his body; he "shall not live by bread alone." In what does the Gospel resemble a feast? In the abundance of its provisions, in the delights of its fellowship, in the satisfaction of our desires, in the pleasure it brings. What are the dainties provided by the Gospel? Forgiveness of sin, understanding of truth, tenderness of heart, trust in God, companionship with the Lord, the promises of God, opportunities for usefulness, joy unspeakable and full of glory. **Bade many**—"Invited many." Jesus was, of course, thinking of the gracious invitations which Jehovah had given to the Jewish people, and especially to their leaders, by the prophets, by John the Baptist, and by Jesus himself, looking to their repentance and preparation for the kingdom of heaven. But, as in most of his parables, there is a secondary meaning, which applies to all who hear the call of Christ. Note that the guests were invited beforehand. An oriental feast was always formal. "In our day the guests are all who have been brought up in Christian families, all who have been trained in church and Sabbath school, all who have studied the word of God."

17. Sent his servant—The "servant" represents every bearer of the Gospel invitation—preacher, Sunday school teacher, friend. **At supper time**—It cannot be said with full confidence that it was customary to remind invited guests of their engagement at the very hour of the banquet; but it would be easy to give such a reminder, because "the guests were close together in an Eastern city," and may have been notified because "they were not generally supplied with timepieces." (*Broadus*.) Or, the sending of the servant may have been occasioned by the puzzling tardiness of the unwilling guests. So the Pharisees and scribes had strangely delayed to accept the gracious invitation of Heaven. **Them that were bidden**—The second message is sent only to those who accepted the first invitation, a fact which turns into insult such excuses as those which follow. **Come**—They must now either accept or reject the invitation. So the ruling party of Judaism could not ignore Jesus or let him alone, as Gamaliel afterward advised them to do (Acts 5. 38). They must either accept or reject the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus. The Gospel summons had an emphasis and importance for the heads of the nation such as it had for no others. **All things are now ready**—Concerning "the fullness of time"—the singular preparation of the world for Christ's coming—see our note on "The Days of Herod the King" in Lesson I. For us also all things are ready. Christ has made an atonement for us; the Father welcomes us; his angels minister to us. The opportunities for holy work were never so ready as now.

Illustration 108. God will not turn away his invited guests. Dr. Bonar tells that on one occasion, having preached on the unpardonable sin, a man came to him and said, "O sir, I have thought for some time that I was a Christian, but now I have great fear that I have committed that unpardonable sin. Did you ever know one who had the same idea?" "That I did," was the reply; "The devil has often plinned me to the wall with the same thought, but I knew if I could come to Christ I had not committed it, for whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out."

Illustration 109. A young man in deep distress of mind applied to his minister for advice and consolation. After he had laid before him the long and black list of sins that troubled his con-

APRIL 12, 1896. PARABLE OF GREAT SUPPER. LUKE 14. 15-24.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
18 And they all with one ⁴ <i>consent</i> began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have	18 now ready. And they all with one <i>consent</i> began to make excuse. The first said unto
4 Isa. 28. 12; Matt. 12. 5, 6; Acts 18. 6.	

science the minister reminded him that there was one blacker still which he had not named. "What can that be, sir?" he despondingly asked. "The sin to which I refer," said the minister, "is that of refusing to accept the invitation of Jesus Christ. He says, 'Come.'" That simple word helped the young man to a personal acceptance of Christ as his Saviour.

II. EXCUSE. VERSES 18-20.

18. **With one consent**—Several sorts of excuses, but one "consent." We have already seen how outwardly gracious and plausible the ruling parties could be toward Jesus and his claims; but Luke has elsewhere shown us that in Galilee and Perea alike they were almost to a man inwardly determined to ignore his miracles and his teaching. The Pharisees could ask the triumphant question of John 7. 48, in any of the four provinces, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" **Began to make excuse**—The word "began" is used to indicate what immediate and surprising effect the urgent summons had. Certainly the host at whose table they were eating that day had had his hospitable summons treated in no such way. The original is a little stronger than our version makes it, being much like our phrase "beg off." The man in verse 15 had sighed piously about the blessedness of eating bread in the kingdom of God; whereas he and all his party were inwardly resolved that they would not accept the invitation which had been given them by Jesus. This trait of the parable admirably represents the hypocritical interest in Jesus which the Pharisees were exhibiting on this very occasion. **The first**—The excuses are alike in their source—an unwilling heart; but there are shades of difference between them. The first represents those in whose hearts dwells the pride of life; the second, those whose time is occupied with the toils of life; the third, those whose worldly associations and affections keep them back from Christ. How many and how varied are the influences which tend to hinder our souls' salvation! **Bought a piece of ground**—A farm. This was a frivolous excuse, since his purchased property could wait until the morrow, while the feast could not be delayed. We should attend first to that duty which can least afford to wait. *Professor Isaac*



"THE STREETS AND LANES OF THE CITY."

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.	him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it: I pray thee have me excused.
19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.	19 me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.
20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.	20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.
21 So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the	21 and therefore I cannot come. And the ² servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his ² servant, Go out

* Prov. 1. 20, 25; 8. 2, 4; Jer. 5. 1; Acts 8. 4, 7; Rev. 22. 17.

* Gr. *bond servant*.

Hall explains: "Just as the invitation reached him he was on the point of going to see that the ground was put under cultivation; not to see what sort of a piece of ground it was, nor to see about confirming its title, as sometimes explained, which would be poor excuses enough." **I must needs go**—Notice a descending scale in the manner of the excuse. The first pleads his necessity; the second states his purpose; the third declines to come. Notice, also, that each one might have sent his regrets at the first invitation if his excuse had been a valid one. Each had permitted himself to become preoccupied with other engagements. The Greek puts the various pretexts prominently forward, thus: "A field; yokes of oxen; a wife."

19, 20. I have bought—The first was too full of pride in his possessions; the second is too full of life's business. **Five yoke of oxen**—Many peasant farmers had as many as this. The one already rich had no desire for salvation; the one seeking to be rich had no time for it. **I go to prove**—It was right to prove his oxen, but wrong to let them carry away his privilege of salvation. **Married a wife**—Marriage in those days was a ground for exemption from military service. Here it represents sensuous pleasure and worldly association. The sin of all these invited guests was not only that their apologies were frivolous, but that they treated this generous invitation as though it were as burdensome as a military conscription.

Illustration 110. *Bunyan* tells how Christian in his journey saw a man busily employed raking together bits of hay, wood, and stubble, while over him stood a shining angel, holding above his head a crown of light. The perishable things about his feet filled his vision so that he could not see the crown which might have been his. A very old prayer from the Book of Common Prayer says, "May we not so strive for things temporal as to lose things eternal."

Illustration 111. All sorts of excuses are given. I met in Jersey City a poor man with white face and trembling limbs, evidently sleepless, without food, badly clothed, and uncleanly. He showed me that he had only seven cents in all the world. I was able by the help of friends to offer him abundance of food for at least a week, a good bed, the use of a bath room, clothing, and pleasant, light employment. He refused; he wanted nothing except what could be turned into liquor. He spent his seven cents on bad whisky, and went on his way—pale, tremulous, sleepless, famished, ragged, filthy, and bad, as before.

III. REJECTION. VERSES 21-24.

21, 22. Showed his lord—The servant bears the message of his master to men, and the answer of men back to his master. So God's ambassadors may go to God with their gratitude over souls won, and their sorrow over hearts hardened. **Being angry**—He resents the stolid indifference which their apologies so effectually disclose; for always apologies are wonderful revealers of character. Can God be angry? Yes, but with a just and righteous indignation. **Go out quickly**—The feast must be enjoyed at once if at all; now is the accepted time, not to-morrow. **Streets and lanes**—"The 'streets' are the larger streets, which widen into squares; the 'lanes' the cross-streets, the byways, hardly wide enough for a man to ride through. Inasmuch as these belonged to the city and were within its walls or inclosure, we must understand these poor and maimed of the more ignorant and despised of the Jews, those whom the rulers and Pharisees and scribes looked down upon as the people,

APRIL 12, 1896. PARABLE OF GREAT SUPPER. LUKE 14. 15-24.

Authorized Version.

city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go

Revised Version.

quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and

22 maimed and blind and lame. And the

23 servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. And

* Gr. bond servant.

the common herd, who, knowing not the law, were cursed (John 7. 49).”—*Sadler*. To the Jews this meant that as their leaders had rejected Jesus he had turned to the masses, even to the publicans and sinners. **The poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind**—“The picture is one impossible for us to realize in our land. In the East, rich in beggars, opulent in misery, without poorhouses or hospitals or other organized means of caring for and lessening misery, and with laws and social organism multiplying it, such a throng as is here described



“THE POOR, THE MAIMED, THE HALT, THE BLIND.”

may be often seen in the city streets or squares, and sometimes gathered together by the rich and generous to receive in fitful gifts their charity, which in Christendom is bestowed in a colder but more systematic and more helpful way.”—*Abbott*. **It is done**—Happy are those workers for Christ who are conscious of having faithfully obeyed their Master. **Yet there is room**—The dregs of the city had been gathered, and the hospitality of the host was as yet unexhausted. God’s provision of grace is vast as the needs of men. While there is one soul hungry his share remains. Who but the Son of man himself could have added this exquisite touch! But the Pharisees had made the kingdom of heaven only large enough for the lineal descendants of Father Abraham.

“**WHAT A GLORIOUS DECLARATION!** There yet is room. Millions have been saved, but there yet is room. Millions have been invited, and have come, and have gone to heaven, but heaven is not yet full. There is a banquet there which no number can exhaust; there are fountains which no number can drink dry; there are harps there which other hands may strike; and there are seats there which others may occupy.”—*Barnes*.

Illustration 112. *Richard Baxter* said: “I am so thankful the invitation says ‘Whosoever.’ If it said, ‘Let Richard Baxter come, and I will in no wise cast out,’ I should be afraid there was another Richard Baxter in the world and it might mean him.”

23. Go out into the highways and hedges—Scour the roads beyond the town walls for

Authorized Version.

out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, 'That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.'

Revised Version.

the lord said unto the 'servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

* Matt. 21. 43; 22. 8; Acts 13. 46.

* Gr. *bond servant*.

tramps, and look in all the fence corners for beggars asleep. They are hungry, for they have asked for bread and they have been given a stone; assuredly they will eat with relish. In the East there are multitudes of homeless beggars who seek to shelter themselves from the sun by day and from the dews by night under trees and bushes outside the cities. These represent in the parable the Gentile nations who were called later than the Jews, yet far more readily accept the word of life. While the twelve apostles in Jerusalem accomplished but little, Paul won thousands among the Gentile nations of Asia and Greece. **Compel them**—Constrain them. There is no persuasion to be offered to those who had already excused themselves, because they showed no interest; but these, who hold themselves to be unworthy of the invitation, and who are shockingly unprepared for the royal feast, are urged and besought to come. They will at first think the news from town a hoax; they will hesitate; they have never had a feast in their whole lives; you will have to use a little gentle violence to get them to believe you; but bring them along. Did these blind Pharisees understand these allusions to the publicans, sinners, Samaritans, Gentiles? No. They little suspected how the brightest young man in their sect would one day count it better to lead a Gentile slave out of the darkest lane in the heathen capital into the kingdom than to be saluted as a rabbi in the temple courts of Jerusalem. By a strange misapprehension, the command "Compel them" has been understood by some to justify persecution, which is contrary to the whole spirit of the Gospel.

24. None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper—This is the final answer to the empty ejaculation of verse 15. If the Pharisees continue in their attitude of indifference to God's call they shall be excluded from his kingdom. "For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8. 24). In the end God deals with men as they in their hearts deal with him. Every soul has the solemn responsibility of choice, and even the Most High abides by its decision.

Illustration 113. There is an old story of a beggar to whom one day there appeared by the wayside a beautiful being, with her hands outstretched, laden with treasures. As he gazed at her in stupid surprise she glided past him; but she returned, with her treasures still held out to him, and once more, with beseeching eyes, as if she would compel him to take what she offered, she passed slowly by and disappeared. She had no sooner gone than, as if waking from a dream, he hurried eagerly in the direction she had taken. He met a traveler, and said, "Have you seen a beautiful stranger, with her hands full of things that I want, going along the road?" "Yes," replied the traveler, "her name is Opportunity." But when she departs she seldom returns. It might, indeed, be said that the same opportunities never return.

Illustration 114. A short time ago two trains collided near the Edinburgh station and seven men were killed. The signalman was simply neglecting his duty, but the awful cost was seven human lives. He was at once arrested. On the day of his trial he was missing, for he feared to face his judge. He is now outlawed, and dares not return home, and all this because he simply neglected his duty. He did nothing actively wrong; he only neglected. And as surely will men be entirely lost if they neglect this salvation offered to them. Discussions of the condition of the lost are irrelevant to this parable. Our first duty is to accept God's invitation.

Illustration 115. A man of the world was heard to offer sympathy to a Christian because he was a church worker and had no time for worldly pleasure. He said, "I will enjoy life, and then at the close I will cry, 'Lord save me!'" A few days later he was thrown from his carriage and killed. He only uttered one word, and that was an oath. To trifle with an invitation from the King of heaven means to place yourself with those of whom it is said, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

As this parable was both given at a supper and relates to a supper it would be well for the teacher to describe an oriental feast, the guests reclining upon couches and wearing robes or scarfs presented by the host.

I. The Giver of the Feast. "A certain man" represents the Lord God, who invites men to receive the blessings of the Gospel. Note in this lesson: 1. God's authority. 2. God's graciousness. 3. God's anger. 4. God's universal mercy, extended to the lowest and neediest.

II. The Great Supper. How aptly the privileges of the Gospel are illustrated by a feast, representing the supply of need, hunger satisfied, joy, companionship. Religion is not merely a life insurance for the next world, it is a delight and a pleasure for this life.

III. The Servants who bore the message are the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles of the New Testament, and in our time every preacher, every Sunday school teacher, and every worker for the Gospel. How high is their honor! how joyful their message!

IV. The Invitation. According to oriental custom two invitations were sent: one, days or weeks in advance, notifying the guests; the other on the day, summoning them at once. So God calls men through his messages to duty and to privilege once and again. It is a King's call; a call to enjoyment; an immediate call.

V. The Rejecters. For rejecters they were in part, though excuses were on their lips. There is a triple application in the parable: 1. To the Pharisees and rulers who rejected Christ, while the common people listened to him. 2. To the Jews as compared with the Gentiles. 3. To those who neglect and those who accept the Gospel invitation now.

VI. The Excuses. Compare them and notice their typical character. As representing the motives of men who refuse Christ: 1. The treasures of the world. 2. The cares of the world. 3. The pleasures of life. How many are kept from Christ by these same influences!

VII. The Guests. While the rich and the noble reject the invitation the poor and lowly enjoy the supper. So was it in Christ's day; the disciples were fishermen and publicans and common people. So it was in the days of Luther and of Wesley. And even now the true followers of Christ are oftener found among the lower than the upper classes of worldly society.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

Burder's "Oriental Literature," i, 94; *Bush's* "Illustrations of Scripture," 588, 589. The great supper, *Andrews*, 375-378; *Edersheim*, ii, 248-299. Streets and lanes, *Geikie's* "Holy Land," i, 460-462, 471, 472, 537. Highways in the time of Christ, *Edersheim's* "Social Life," 42-47. Poor and maimed, *Stapfer*, 218, 460; *Geikie's* "Holy Land," i, 278.

THE INVITATION.
COME.

THE EARTHLY | THE GOSPEL
FEAST IS READY.

THE EXCUSES.

THEN.

BOUGHT LAND.
TRY OXEN.
MARRIED A WIFE.

NOW.

STUDY.
WORK.
PLEASURE.

"YET THERE IS ROOM."

WHY NOT ACCEPT?

"COME, FOR ALL THINGS ARE NOW READY."



"FIVE YOKE OF OXEN."

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS II AND III.

Discourse on counting the cost (Luke 14. 25-35). Chapter 15 contains the parables of the lost sheep, of the piece of silver, and of the prodigal son; all of which were spoken to the publicans and sinners who "drew near unto Him for to hear him," and to the Pharisees and scribes who murmured at his kind reception of the outcasts. Lesson III ends with verse 24. The remaining eight verses of the chapter continue the parable by the story of the elder son.



LESSON III.—APRIL 19.

THE LOST FOUND.—LUKE 15. 11-24.

[Read Luke 15. 1-52.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.—Luke 15. 10.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Very early in A. D. 30.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PARABLE.—The moral condition of the lapsed classes, who are supposed to be as careless of God as they are of Mosaic law, temple, and synagogue, which was only hinted at in the bewildered sheep and the lost coin fallen from nobler uses, is now more fully and accurately represented in the degraded son, who in his disgrace loathes sin and yearns for his father's favor more sincerely than any exemplary son can. The love of God toward the sinful is more faithfully suggested by a human father's eagerness for the return of his wayward and ruined son than by a housewife's distress at the loss of a coin or a shepherd's anxiety for a lost sheep. The inexcusable apathy of the rulers toward the lost, which is no more than suggested in the introductory parables, is drawn in this one with striking faithfulness and precision (verses 25-32).

ENVIRONMENTS.—Jesus was still journeying through the province of Perea, with his face toward Calvary, though none but himself could see the dark shadow of the cross that lay athwart his path. Great multitudes gathered about him from all directions: Pharisees and learned men, self-righteous and contemptuous of others; "common people," weary with bearing burdens too heavy to be borne; publicans and sinners, outcasts from society, conscious of their temporal and eternal needs, and eager to find a way of salvation. To these various classes Jesus addressed this "pearl of parables." The chief incidents of the story must, as *Dr. Plumptre* suggests, have been "painfully familiar" to those who heard it. Many a wayward Perea youth had doubtless left his father's house to seek his fortune in a far country amid riotous heathen associations. The strict Hebrew would account such a one as "lost." Not all who heard this parable could understand the Saviour's intimation that every human soul was wandering farther away from God than did the prodigal son from his indulgent father. To us its teachings are exhaustless. Our youngest and least attentive scholar should be made to understand that the Lord here portrays the condition of the lost, points out the path wherein they may find pardon, and proclaims the welcome they may expect from our heavenly Father.

LESSON HYMN.—

The prodigal, with streaming eyes, From folly just awake,
Reviews his wanderings with surprise; His heart begins to break.
"With deep repentance I'll return, And seek my Father's face;
Unworthy to be called a son, I'll ask a servant's place."
Far off the Father saw him move, In pensive silence mourn,
And quickly ran, with arms of love, To welcome his return.—*Lydia H. Sigourney.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (April 18), Joy in heaven, Luke 15. 1-10. *Tuesday*, The Lost Found, Luke 15. 11-24. *Wednesday*, Joy of salvation, Luke 15. 25-32. *Thursday*, Departing from God, Jer. 17. 1-10. *Friday*, Punishment and pardon, 2 Chron. 33. 1-13. *Saturday*, The Father's voice, Ezek. 18. 20-32. *Sunday*, Return! Return! Hosea 14.

Authorized Version.

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me ¹ the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them ² his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey

Revised Version.

11 And he said, A certain man had two

12 sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of ¹ thy substance that falleth to me. And he di-

13 vided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all

¹ Deut. 21. 16, 17.—² Mark 19. 44.

¹ Gr. *the*.

I. LOST. VERSES 11-16.

11. He said—Jesus had just told of “the lost sheep” and “the lost piece of money.” The story of “the prodigal son” emphasizes the same precious truths—the Father’s eagerness to save the lost and his rejoicing over the redeemed. **A certain man**—This man, in his love for his wayward boy, represents God, who not only loves his saints, but loved them while they were yet sinners. **Two sons**—Those who heard Jesus would at once identify the prodigal with the publicans and “sinners,” and the elder brother with the Pharisees and “just” people—the two general classes mentioned in Luke 15. 1, 2. The two types of character are found in every age and country, and almost every village. To-day the church-going portion of the community resembles one, the irreligious world the other. Out from the same home influences go two human souls—the one to reverence goodness, the other to revel in evil. Every soul makes its own choice of character.

12. The younger—Youth is taken as a symbol of inexperience and folly. Ignorance has so much to do with the wrongdoings of men and women that *Socrates’s* doctrine that ignorance even accounted for sin need not surprise us. **Give me the portion**—The origin of the sinful condition of the degraded classes is here gently suggested as lying in an impatience of the restraints which God’s love imposes. The younger son’s “portion” would be one third of the estate, since Jewish law gave a double portion to the first-born son. As the father was still living the son had no legal right to what he asked. It is not uncommon, however, for parents to unconsciously train the youngest child to expect special favors. **Divided unto them**—But evidently, from the rest of the story, he retained his own authority over the elder son’s share. **His living**—His property; allegorically, it may stand for that endowment of enlightenment, knowledge, and privilege which every soul possesses, but not all in the same measure.

13. And not many days—His father’s companionship was irksome to him, and he felt that the sooner he could rid himself of it the better. **Gathered all**—In some Greek manuscripts the word “all” is made particularly emphatic, as indicating the earnestness of the younger son to devote himself wholly and without restraint to his new life of liberty and pleasure. **A far country**—We must think of him as settling in some such voluptuous center as Rome, Corinth, or

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“THE HUSKS THAT THE SWINE DID EAT”—
CAROB-TREE PODS.

Authorized Version.

into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a

Revised Version.

together, and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had

Alexandria, far away from synagogues and Sabbaths. The wide sea rolling between him and his father's home may typify the distance of a lost soul from its God. **Riotous living**—Reckless waste of noble energies. The Greek word here is that from which our word "sot" is derived.

IMPATIENCE WITH RESTRAINT is soon followed by lawless behavior. The sinful thought speedily develops into the sinful deed.

A SINNING HEART WOULD SOON WEARY OF HEAVEN if it could possibly enter its gates. He who has no love for his father soon finds his father's home wearisome. The publicans, whom this parable would not ordi- home in the more than mod- ern liquor deal- joy a prayer

THERE IS NO THE SINNER. He ical vigor; 3. Character; 5. Time; 6. Op-

"WILL ANY from any really from Sunday tion, and influ- right sort? We to answer that the help of this case of wander- plained as prov- fault in parents doubt more to prevent wan- the ideal home teacher were in would wander Eden, and from parable. What- ther's house' of have been in- sent, it surely rangements pro- himself for our yet from these,

in his hands, the younger son wandered and fell into sin and misery. A child is possessed of tendencies and passions and will all its own."—*J. P. Otis.*

14. **Spent all**—His life of pleasure soon came to an end, and with it an emergency which in his youthful folly he had not anticipated. **A mighty famine**—It is hard enough to be without money in a foreign country at any time; but it is far harder when a scarcity prevails,



"NO MAN GAVE UNTO HIM."

SUCH WASTER AS wastes, 1. Phys- 2. Mental power; 4. Influence; portunity.

WANDER, THEN, good homes, school instruc- ences of the might not beable question without parable; every ing might be ex- ing some great or teachers. No might be done dering, but if or school or existence some thence as from the home of this ever else the 'fa- this parable may tended to repre- represents ar- vided by God welfare; and and with these

Authorized Version.

mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And ³he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and ⁴no man gave unto him.

Revised Version.

spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent

16 him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have been filled with ³the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave

³ Isa. 44. 29; Lam. 4. 5.—⁴ Psalm 142. 4.

³ Gr. the pods of the carob tree.

especially if one has not mastered the secret of self-support. Famines were as common incidents of ancient civilization as railroad disasters are of ours. Even yet in the Orient they occur,

and by them millions swept in a Gentile city during famine the Jews were hated by the preas they have the worst classes tendom. He emphasizes on the suggests his utteration for such Want is "char-far country." spair, and suicide in the ancient

15, 16. Joined Greek word himself." He the citizen's will, him to permit the most menial domestic serv-do anything for man, to earn a To feed swine such labor would able degraded loathed pigs that named them, but "those other herds were ac-prodigious had no Jesus means by

paint the degraded wickedness of the publicans and sinners with colors as vivid as those which any of his critics would employ. Would fain—He who had squandered his father's money on riotous living was brought so low as to envy the very swine because of the abundance of food they had. Husks—The chocolate-colored, beanlike pods of the carob tree, which have a sweetish taste, and are sometimes eaten by the poorest people. They are good food for pigs,

lions are some-away. Nobody would fare worse than a Jew, for as thoroughly Christian world been by many of of modern Chris-gan—The em-Greek pronoun ter want of prepa-a visitation. acteristic of the Weariness, de-were universal world.

himself — The means "glued" "stuck" against and besought him to perform of personal or ices. He would this heathen crumb of bread. —To engage in be an unspeak-tion. Jews so they never called them things." Swine-cursed; but this other resource. this detail to



"HE WAS LOST, AND IS FOUND."

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
17 And ⁶ when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!	17 unto him. But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare,
18 I ⁶ will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,	18 and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against
19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.	19 heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as

⁶ Jer. 21. 18, 19; Esck. 18. 28; Acts 2. 27.—⁶ 2 Kings 7. 3, 4; 2 Chron. 33. 12, 13; Psalm 32. 5; Jer. 31. 6.

and may deaden human hunger, but not satisfy. **No man gave**—He could not earn enough to satisfy his hunger, and no man cared for him. He discovers a contrast between his home and the far country of which he had been ignorant before. The publicans and sinners had had nothing but neglect until Jesus came.

II. FOUND. VERSES 17-24.

17. Came to himself—Began to think reasonably and truly of his own foolish career. Hitherto he had acted like a man deprived of his reason. **Servants**—Perhaps “those who serve God from the hope of reward, not in the spirit of filial love.” But do not press details too closely. The prodigal realizes that to be a doorkeeper in God's house is better than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. **Enough and to spare**—The prodigal's emphasis on the first personal pronoun reveals a lurking consciousness of sonship.

THE FIRST STEP TOWARD SALVATION is to realize the wretchedness of sin. Even in this life sin gives but a barren, unsatisfying recompense; and what of the life to come? The first motive which prompts the sinner to repentance is sometimes the lowest one, the pressure of necessity. Any motive is worthy that leads to abandonment of sin and search for God.

“WHAT IS THE MIGHTIEST INFLUENCE TO DRAW BACK THE WANDERER? The memory of his home and the certainty that its resources can never be wasted by such famines as come in a far-off land. If teachers can so exhibit ‘the fruits of the Spirit’ as to make that impression on young souls their power will be far-reaching and mighty indeed. We must make home, church, Sunday-school, places where the higher nature shall be fed by the spirit of a large, genial, sanctified human fellowship, and most of all by the energies of the Holy Spirit pervading all that is done. Alas for parents, pastors, teachers who cannot thus reach out into distant lands and years with reclaiming power!”—*J. P. Otis*.

18, 19. I will arise and go to my father—Remorse avails nothing without practical repentance. That I WILL transforms him from a prodigal to a penitent. The triumphant answer of Jesus to his critics was that he cultivated low society, not for any love of sin, but because that society was being drawn toward God and purity. Compare verse 1. **Father, I have sinned**—The hardest words in the language to sincerely utter. When the publicans could be brought to a knowledge and abandonment of their sins Jesus needed no elaborate defense for his association with them. The penitent publican was surer of justification than the self-righteous Pharisee (Luke 18. 9-14). **Against heaven**—Rather, “unto heaven,” heaven-high. The truly penitent soul realizes that sin against God surpasses all other sin. **No more worthy**—One of the tokens of true repentance is deep consciousness of unworthiness. **As one of thy hired servants**—The “as” shows that he still feels himself to be a son.

Illustration 116. “Repentance is not fear, nor feeling, nor praying, nor breaking off some one sin. Repentance is ‘right about face.’ Some one has said man is born with his face turned away from God. When he truly repents he is turned right around toward God. It does not take a long while to turn around. A vessel went down some time ago on the Newfoundland coast. There was a moment when the captain could have given orders to reverse the engines and turn back. Then the ship would have been saved.”—*Moody*.

Authorised Version.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But ¹when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven,² and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put ³a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 ¹⁰For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Revised Version.

20 one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell

21 on his neck, and ²kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no

22 more worthy to be called thy son.⁴ But the father said to his ³servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and

23 shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make

24 merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

¹ Acts 2. 39; Eph. 2. 13, 17.—² Psalm 51. 4.—³ Gen. 41. 42; Esther 8. 10; 8. 2.—¹⁰ Ver. 22; Eph. 2. 1; 5. 14; Rev. 2. 1.

³ Gr. *kissed him much*.—⁴ Some ancient authorities add *make me as one of thy hired servants*. See ver. 19.—⁵ Gr. *bond servants*.

20, 21. **He arose, and came**—Having come to himself, he now acts like himself, and goes at once to his father. Good resolves should have prompt execution. **To his father**—More accurately, “toward his own father.” 1. The sinner may go *toward* God, but can never come to him unless the Father goes out to meet him. 2. His *own* father. The citizen who made a swineherd of him may have been father to some one else, but he was no father to him. **When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him**—He had had to join himself closely to the citizen before the latter would do anything for him. Though the Pharisees thought the sinners were so far away as to be utterly lost the heavenly Father eagerly welcomed the first signs of their penitence and return. **Had compassion**—Instead of resentment. God’s “property is always to have mercy.” **Ran**—Forgiveness has feet as fleet as the feet of penitence. **Fell on his neck**—Embraced him. The Greek compound suggests fervor and intensity of emotion. **The son said**—Note the use of the word “son” in place of “he.” The publicans and sinners are sons of God, the brethren of the Pharisees. Zaccheus, though a tax-gatherer, is a son of Abraham (Luke 19. 9). **No more worthy**—Textual criticism has made it quite probable that the prodigal was represented as saying to his father all he had intended to say. Whatever faults the publican had, hypocrisy was not one of them.

22, 23, 24. **But the father said**—Possibly interrupting the penitent confession; but see last note on verse 21. **Bring forth**—The Revised Version here adds *quickly*; for the Greek shows the impetuosity of fatherly love. The phrase is very like our colloquial phrase, “Hurry up and bring.” **The best robe**—“The first robe.” God finds men in beggars’ rags and arrays them in royal robes. Eastern robes are as easily transferable as ladies’ shawls would be with us. **Ring . . . shoes**—Courtesies which might be extended to an honored guest. The “shoes” were sandals. **Fatted calf**—Kept in readiness for a public festival of thanksgiving. **Kill it**—In the warm climate of the East meat must be eaten very soon after being killed. **Be merry**—This is a third invitation to the Pharisees to rejoice in, rather than murmur at, the attention which the degraded give to Jesus. Christ often represents his religion by the figure of a feast, never by that of a funeral. **Dead**—“Death” is often used in the Bible as a figure to represent unrepented sin. **Alive again**—True life begins when the sinner, “dead in trespasses and sins,” is awakened to righteousness by the voice of forgiveness.

“NOT ALWAYS THE WANDERER—the heedless and wayward scholar—is least impressed by the truth of God. As we stand between the scowling elder brother, with the bitter fountain of selfishness now bursting to the surface, and that sin-scarred younger brother, driven home by famine, it is hard to see superiority in either. The elder was more respectable and the younger was more humble, and all that the father can specially rejoice over is that one is ‘found’

and 'alive.' The great outlines of the moral history of two utterly unlike types of humanity flash before us in the parable, and we come away saying of humanity, 'There is no difference, for all have sinned;' saying also of God, 'He is able to save unto the uttermost.'—*J. P. Otis.*

HUMAN NATURE IS NOT ALL IN BOYS AND GIRLS. "Pastors, parents, and teachers do not always reach the standard of the Father here pictured. The occasion of the parable was the need of revealing—to themselves and the world—the wrong spirit of those who supposed themselves to be the owners of God's estate. It clearly teaches that, unless God save us from it, we who suppose ourselves to be teachers and guides 'will think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think,' and will deal wrongly with the erring. God is better and wiser than any of us in dealing with a lost world. Let us seek his love and wisdom that we may be 'workers together with him.'"—*J. P. Otis.*

Illustration 117. Antioch offended the emperor Theodosius, and incurred his fierce anger. The whole population was proscribed, and the prisons filled with men doomed to death. Each day brought new terrors, and it seemed that the imperial resentment could be appeased by nothing short of the city's destruction. But, very quietly, Christian influences were working on the emperor's heart. Soon the citizens heard that a messenger would shortly arrive from court to declare their fate. They assembled at the city gates to beg for their lives. But when the messenger came it was *with a pardon in his hand*; he gladly proclaimed it, and restored safety and prosperity to all.

Illustration 118. On two successive occasions in my life—two very happy occasions—I used each evening to hasten home intent on one purpose, to take into my arms a baby. I expected to place her on my knee, to look down into her eyes, and to listen to her prattle; and, tired as I was, I knew that her presence would rest me, for I loved that child with unutterable tenderness. Why? The fact was, she loved me but a very, very little. If my heart had been breaking with sorrow it would not have disturbed her sleep; if my body had been racked with pain it would not have interrupted her play; if I had died and been carried away for burial she would in two or three weeks have totally forgotten her father. She had never brought me in a penny, and had been a constant expense; and I was poor in those days. And yet there never was money enough in all this world to buy my baby. How was that? Did she love me, or did I love her? Did I withhold my love until I knew she loved me? Would any father have withheld such love? Would any father have waited for her to do something worthy of love before extending it to her? And will God, who is Love, so wait and withhold love from us his children? No, no. It is not our love to God, it is God's love to us, that we should constantly think about. We love him because he first loved us.

Illustration 119. "We built a house in Chicago some years ago, and were very anxious to teach the people the love of God. We thought if we could not preach it into their hearts we would try and burn it in; so we put right over the pulpit in gas jets these words—*God is Love*. A man going along the street one night glanced through the door and saw the text. He was a poor prodigal. As he passed on he thought to himself, 'God is love? No! he does not love me, for I am a poor miserable sinner.' He tried to get rid of the text, but it seemed to stand out before him in letters of fire. He turned back and went into the meeting. He did not hear the sermon. That short text was lodged in his heart, and that was enough. He stayed after the meeting closed, and I found him weeping like a child. As I told him how God had loved him all the while, although he had wandered so far away, and was waiting to receive him, the light of the Gospel broke into his mind, and he went away rejoicing."—*Moody.*

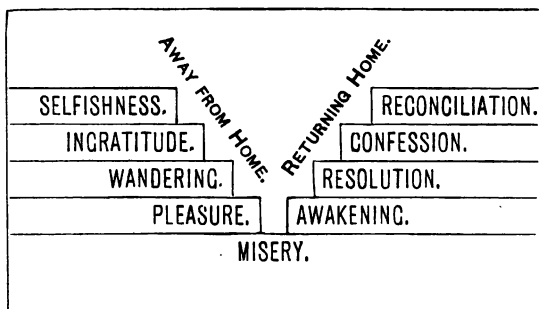
Illustration 120. "This pearl of parables has been a popular theme in art. Sometimes the story is told in a score of scenes, as in a noble window in the cathedral of Chartres, while in others the one moment of the son's confession and the father's forgiveness suggests the whole parable. Dufu's large triptych, which was exhibited a few years since in our large cities, has been widely copied by engraving and photograph. The life which so fascinated the son attracts our eye in the central panel. The wide portico, or loggia, of an eastern palace is filled with a gay company. Its beautiful columns are garlanded with leaves. On the tiled pavement before it a group of professional dancers are keeping time to the soft music of stringed instruments. Some of the young men's friends are lounging, some are drinking wine from massive cups, and some are stimulating their languid spirits with the excitement of gambling. In the midst the prodigal stands with lifted cup. In his face there is a remembrance of former innocence, but no apprehension of coming want. Yet in this richly dressed and gayly companied youth the world, the flesh, and the devil touch their highest note. In the left panel we see a swineherd. He is seated upon a stone. His weary feet are carelessly apart, and his head is upon his breast. It is toward evening, and the birds are flying homeward; but for him there is no call from labor, either to food or sheltered sleep. At the right, thank God! shamefaced and in rags, we see his return. He is at the feet of his father, who, embracing him, lifts his right hand to heaven in acknowledgment of answered prayer."—*J. Wearé Dearborn.* The last two scenes have been copied for this lesson by our artist, pages 124, 125.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The story of the prodigal son illustrates two chapters in human history, **The Way from God and The Way to God.**

I. The way from God is shown in five stages: 1. *Rebellion* (verses 11, 12), the restlessness under a right yoke and the determination to lead an independent and self-directed life. Many a prodigal has taken his first wrong step in yearning for freedom from the restraints of home, from the church, and from pure society. 2. *Wandering* (verse 13). The "far country" may not be geographically distinct from the home land, but it is a country where a different atmosphere is breathed, a different society is found, where a father's admonitions, a mother's prayers, a sister's love have lost for a time, and perhaps forever, their potent spell. 3. *Waste* (verse 13). All sin is a waste—of golden hours, of God-given power, of high talents, of priceless opportunities. 4. *Want* (verse 14). "There is always a mighty famine in that land," a famine of all that sustains and satisfies the true and better nature of man. Every sinner is conscious of an unsatisfied longing. 5. *Degradation* (verse 15). When one enters into partnership with the citizen of that country some degrading occupation, some vile association, is sure to follow. How many "feeders of swine" are in society to-day?

II. The way to God is shown in six steps: 1. *He comes to himself* (verse 17). All sin is a species of insanity. In his wandering and sin the prodigal was not his true self. When he awakes to the consciousness of his true condition hope of his salvation begins. 2. *He thinks of home* (verse 17), and this brings him nearer to it. When the sinner calls up the picture of God, home, heaven, he can no longer remain in the land of famine. 3. *He resolves* (verses 18, 19). The firm "I will" has closed the door of ruin behind and opened the door of heaven before many a poor prodigal. 4. *He returns* (verse 20). True repentance is not the agonizing consciousness of sin, nor is it the bitter sorrow over it. It is the turning from it, and the renunciation of it, whether done in calmness or in tears. 5. *He confesses* (verse 21). There must be the open confession both of past sin, of present turning, and of future purpose, to constitute a true prerequisite for salvation and peace. 6. *He is reconciled* (verses 22-24). The father has been reconciled to his wandering son all the time, and has watched for his return; but now the son is reconciled, and enjoys the peace, the pardon, and the delight of fellowship in his own home.



GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

Lost and found, *Andrews*, 378; *Edersheim*, ii, 253-258; *Geikie*, ii, 328, 329; *Hanna*, 428; *Pressensé*, 329, 330. Two words for repentance, *Geikie*, i, 565; *Trench*, "Synonyms." Christ receiving sinners, *Farrar*, i, 424, 425. Finding the lost, *Thomson*, ii, 316-330.



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS III AND IV.

Luke 16 contains the parable of the Unjust Steward and the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, which is to be our next lesson. Between the two our Lord contrasts the law and the prophets with the "kingdom of God," and gives his law concerning marriage, verses 14-18.

LESSON IV.—APRIL 26.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.—LUKE 16. 19-31.

[Read the entire chapter, Luke 16.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—Luke 16. 13.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—A. D. 30.

ENVIRONMENTS OF THE LESSON.—This parable was uttered by our Lord somewhere in Perea during his last journey to Jerusalem, A. D. 30. Like the parable of the unjust steward, it is given only by Luke. Luke 15. 2 shows how the religious teachers of that day kept themselves, as a matter of principle, aloof from the morally outcast classes. This chapter (see verse 14) shows that they quite assiduously avoided the poor and suffering (compare Matt. 23. 14), and that from motives of simple avarice. Our Lord's teachings concerning worldliness were constantly disdained by the rabbis of all sects. To show that the opinions of earth are not the standards of heaven, that the most envied here are not always the favored there, that the despised here may prove to be the honored ones hereafter, the Lord lifts the curtain of the eternal world and bids his revilers look upon the contrast of the rich man and Lazarus, both in this life and the life to come.

LESSON HYMN.—

Beyond this vale of tears There is a life above,
Unmeasured by the flight of years; And all that life is love.
There is a death, whose pang Outlasts the fleeting breath:
O what eternal horrors hang Around the second death!
Thou God of truth and grace, Teach us that death to shun;
Lest we be banished from thy face, For evermore undone.—*Montgomery.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (April 20), The Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16. 19-31.
Tuesday, Dangerous ease, Amos 6. 1-8. *Wednesday*, Unsafe trusting, Luke 12. 13-21.
Thursday, Wealth without goodness, Eccles. 6. *Friday*, "Love not the world," 1 John 2. 8-17.
Saturday, Treasure in heaven, Matt. 6. 19-34. *Sunday*, The eternal reward, Matt. 25. 31-46.

Authorized Version.

19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in ¹purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

Revised Version.

19 Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen,

¹Judg. 8. 26; Esth. 8. 15.

I. OUR LORD'S VIEW OF A PALACE. VERSES 19-21.

19. A certain rich man—Not apparently what is generally called a wicked character, but a prosperous worldling, living solely for this present life, with little care for others and no care for the world to come. He is unnamed, but early legend gave him the name Nimeusia. He is often called Dives, but that is simply the Latin for "a rich man." *Dr. Plumptre* suggests that Jesus by his portraiture of this rich man indicates Herod Antipas, and that this parable was aimed directly at scribes of the Herodian school. **Purple and fine linen**—Descriptive of extreme luxury. The unobtrusive black which Europeans wear would find little favor in the Orient, where both sexes delight in striking colors. The famous purple dye made from a Syrian seashell is now lost. "Purple" robes were worn only by princes and generals. The "fine linen" of Egypt, here alluded to, was as transparent as lawn and as fine as silk; so transparent and fine that it was called "woven air;" and a robe of it, well woven, was said to be

APRIL 26, 1896. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS. LUKE 16. 19-31.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
20 And there was a certain beggar named Laz'a-rus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,	20 ¹ faring sumptuously every day: and a certain beggar named Laz'a-rus was laid at
21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.	21 his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the <i>crumbs</i> that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and
¹ Or, living in mirth and splendor every day.	

worth "twice its weight in gold." "Such garments are still worn indoors by ladies in India and in China. I have seen some so transparent that when spread on the grass they were not readily discernible."—*Clarke*. **Fared sumptuously**—Better, "made merry in splendor." Compare Luke 15. 23, 24, 29, 32. *Wyclif* translates quaintly, "He ate, each day, shiningly." **Every day**—What other nabobs did on exceptional occasions became his daily habit. But his guilt lay not so much in possessing these "vanities" (for it is not intimated that he had wrongly acquired them), but in living for them.

Illustration 121. The danger of riches. Tell the story of the man who leaped overboard from a burning ship with a belt of gold around him, and was dragged by its weight under the water and drowned.

20. A certain beggar—Literally, "a poor man." **Named Lazarus**—Lazarus (Eleazar) means "God-is-the-helper." The beggar is probably given a proper name to facilitate the dialogue of verses 24-31, as *Hofmann* suggests. This view seems preferable to that which makes the name symbolical. It is notable, however, as the only instance in our Lord's parables of a personal name. *Dr. Plumptre*, who loves to identify "the young ruler that had great possessions" (Luke 18. 18) with Lazarus of Bethany, believes that this name was, in this parable, used as the name of a beatified beggar to teach the brother of Mary and Martha that if he wished for eternal life he must strip himself of the wealth which made it impossible for him to enter the kingdom of God. **Was laid**—He was too ill and feeble even to hobble there, so he was laid (literally "thrown")—carelessly left by unsympathetic bearers, who little thought that angels would be proud next day to take their places. **At his gate**—At the outer portal toward the street, where the rich man could not fail to see him as often as he passed out or in. Gates in the Orient (whether public or private) are apt to be infested by beggars. So throughout the world the rich and poor must meet face to face. No rich man can escape the presence of the beggar at his gate. "Any Lazarus," writes *Dr. Cowles*, "laid at any rich man's gate is as sure a test as if Jesus himself were there under the guise of the beggar in his rags, his hunger, and his sores." **Full of sores**—Instead of "merry splendor" Lazarus had painful ulcerations, which were probably the result of want of food. This poor man's hard plight has given to nearly all modern European languages a set of sad words, such as *lazar house*, *lazaroni*, etc., all indicative of want and disease.

21. Desiring to be fed—Whether or not the desire was gratified we know not. **Crumbs**—The soft and doughy part of thin cakes, of which the rich ate the delicate crust, and, wiping their fingers on the other portion, threw it away. "The absence of knives and forks and the like makes the amount of waste of this kind in the East much larger than do the habits of modern Europe."—*Plumptre*. **Moreover**—Literally, "but even." **The dogs** got the fragments Lazarus longed for, then came and worried him. In Syrian cities dogs are half wild, and prowl at night and day at large in the streets. They are not petted, as with us, but are regarded as unclean and repulsive, as buzzards or hyenas would be by us. They are the only scavengers of Eastern cities. These ownerless hungry dogs are thought of as *adding* to the beggar's misery, rather than as alleviating it. **Licked his sores**—He was so feeble he could not drive them away.

Illustration 122. Opportunity is like a rope swinging within reach of a drowning man; pass it by and it may not return.

Authorized Version.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried ³ by the angels into A'bra-ham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

³ Psalm 91. 11, 12; Heb. 1. 14.

Revised Version.

22 licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into A'bra-ham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and

II. OUR LORD'S VIEW OF HELL. VERSES 22-26.



TRADITIONAL HOUSES OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

22. It came to pass—One thing is sure to come to pass for us all—death. **The beggar died**—Of disease and hunger, doubtless. No mention is made of his burial. **Was carried by the angels**—From dogs to angels! Listen to quaint old *Matthew Henry*: “Angels were not shy of touching Lazarus, for his sores were all on his body; his soul was without a spot.” The entire background and machinery

of the story are in accord with current Jewish belief. **Abraham's bosom**—The Jews used three phrases to indicate the heavenly state—“the throne of glory,” “Paradise or Eden,” and “the bosom of Abraham,” of which the last was the most popular. The fancy that lay behind it was that of a great feast in which “the father of the faithful was host.” **The rich man also died**—No amount of gold can buy off death. See Job 21. 13. **Was buried**—There was a grand funeral, doubtless, and a costly tomb; but a lost soul. The prime meaning of the whole story is that there is a life beyond the grave both for the just and the unjust.

Illustration 123. The soul's life separate from the body. Reread, if you can, the account of Socrates's death,

and especially his words, “Bring me if you find me: my real self will escape you.”

Illustration 124. When the great Puritan, Owen, lay on his deathbed, his secretary wrote (in his name) to a friend, “I am still in the land of the living.” “Stop,” said Owen, “alter that; say, ‘I am yet in the land of the dying, but I hope soon to be in the land of the living.’”

Illustration 125. The hour of death is the hour of “beginning life.” 1. This life is the “school-time.” 2. Our lot in the life to come depends upon how we spend this “school-time.” 3. However busily the time may be occupied, all is of no use unless it does actually prepare us for the life to

APRIL 26, 1896. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS. LUKE 16. 19-31.

Authorized Version.

23 And ³in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth A'bra-ham afar off, and Laz'a-rus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father A'bra-ham, have mercy on me, and send Laz'a-rus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and 'cool my tongue; for I ⁵am tormented in this flame.

Revised Version.

23 was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth A'bra-ham afar off, and Laz'a-rus in his

24 bosom. And he cried and said, Father A'bra-ham, have mercy on me, and send Laz'a-rus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for

³ Psalm 9. 17; Prov. 5. 5; Isa. 14. 9.—⁴ Zech. 14. 12.—
⁵ Isa. 66. 34; Mark 9. 44, etc.

come. 4. "When the spiritual school-time is over vain regrets will neither recall it nor make up for it; it is then *too late*."

Illustration 126. When the messengers of King Saul burst into David's house to arrest him, and found, in the bed they were ordered to take to their master, not the warrior supposed to be lying there sick, but an image laid on a goats'-hair pillow, they needed no assurance that the real David was gone. That was evident. But he was not more truly gone away from his bed than a man goes from it when he dies; and yet nothing is harder than to realize, as we watch the life ebbing away, and count the scarcely perceptible breathings of the dying, that as the last breath is drawn *the man is gone*—gone off from our utmost reach, in a moment, and whither? We are bused with the poor earthly remains, with the body which we love, and indeed rightly love and rightly care for, but which is not the man after all. It is but "the earthly house of this tabernacle."

23. Hell—Revised Version, *Hades*. The literal meaning of this word is "The Invisible;" it was applied to the realm of disembodied spirits, both good and bad. The word "hell" of the Authorized Version is, therefore, too restricted a term. The word probably brought to our Lord's hearers the thought of a place where men lived without their bodies; but with two widely severed departments—the delightful abode of the righteous and the dreary dwelling place of the wicked. **Lifted up his eyes**—Disembodied spirits, doubtless, have powers of cognition. Even on earth it is the living soul that sees through the fleshly eyes. **Being in torments**—The torments of remorse, ungratified desire, and guilty forebodings. "The Greek word was applied originally to the test or touchstone of metals; then to the torture to which men had recourse as the one sure test of the veracity of witnesses; then to torments generally."—*Plumptre*. The participle suggests these torments as a permanent condition. As the rich man's body had been buried, the torment is thought of as afflicting his soul. **Seeth Abraham afar off**—Remote, perhaps in distance; perhaps in character. **In his bosom**—Reclining at table with the father of the Jewish nation, and occupying the post of honor at the banquet. We must remember that throughout this story we are in "the region of symbolic imagery."

DEATH IS NOT "A SLEEP AND A FORGETTING." No interval of unconsciousness on the part of either Lazarus or the rich man is intimated.

Illustration 127. A minister being asked by a friend during his last illness whether he thought himself dying, answered, "Really, friend, I care not whether I am or not; for if I die I shall be with God; and if I live he will be with me."

24. Father Abraham—Clinging to some hope from his relationship to Abraham—a sort of church membership—though that very fact made his guilt the greater. Read Luke 3. 8. **Send Lazarus**—These words might indicate the old selfish arrogance and heartlessness; but they are more likely to indicate a pathetic craving for the sympathy of one for whom in his lifetime he had only contempt. He had never before acknowledged the beggar as a neighbor, but now, like the wounded Jew on the Jericho road, he will gladly enough associate with the outcast. **Cool my tongue**—With the drops of water that trickle from his finger tips. His request is as moderate as had been the desire of Lazarus (verse 21). **Tormented**—Rather, "I am suffering pain;" same word as is used for the sorrow of Joseph and Mary when the child Jesus was missing (Luke 2. 48). **In this flame**—Material flame could not touch a spirit. But the sudden and excruciating pain which fire gives to the flesh is a symbol of the sorrow and remorse which have power to produce a like effect upon the soul. "What is meant," says *Dr.*

Authorized Version.

25 But A'bra-ham said, Son, * remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Laz'a-rus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither * can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

Revised Version.

25 I am in anguish in this flame. But A'bra-ham said, * Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and Laz'a-rus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art 26 in anguish. And * beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross

* Job 21. 13; chap. 6. 24.—* 2 Thess. 1. 9; Rev. 20. 10; 22. 11.

* Gr. *Child*.—* Or, *in all these things*.

Plumptre, "is that there shall be for the soul of the evil doer, when brought face to face with the holiness of God (which is as a 'consuming fire,' Heb. 12. 29), an anguish as intolerable as the touch of earthly flame is to the nerves of the mortal body." The thought is expressed with great beauty in *Cardinal Newman's* "Dream of Gerontius: "

"And these two pains, so counter and so keen, The longing for him, when thou seest him not, The shame of self at thought of seeing him, Will be the veriest, sharpest purgatory."

25. Abraham said—The answer is fatherly, calm, and solemn, without mocking. **Son**—Note how tenderly the lost soul is addressed. Abraham does not disown his relationship. "Son" here is the word the father uses to the elder son in the parable of the prodigal son. **Remember**—Memory assuredly survives the grave. **Thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things**—Like the rich man of Luke 12. 19, the rich young ruler of Luke 18. 23, and the Pharisees of Luke 16. 14, he had *chosen* the things of this life in preference to being rich toward God. Temporal delights were *his good things*—the only delights he longed for. **Lazarus** had chosen the eternal things, and had had a hard time till the dawn of eternity brought him bliss. **Evil things**—But not "*his* evil things," for he never chose them. **Thou art tormented**—Having laid up no treasure in heaven, nothing remains for him but misery. The truths of the parable are given in plain prose in Luke 6. 22-25.

TWO REFLECTIONS may be wisely made here: 1. Better Potter's Field and a convoy of angels than a pompous funeral and fiery torments. 2. The best mansions on earth are owned by the men who have the most dollars; occupancy of the mansions of heaven is determined by character.

Illustration 128. Trusting in riches. Two gentlemen were passing a fine estate when one asked, "What is the value of this estate?" "I only know what it cost its late possessor." "How much?" "His soul. He used to be a Christian, but became absorbed in money-making and the pleasures of life, and forgot the life beyond. When dying he said, 'My prosperity has been my ruin.'"

Illustration 129. In Venice there lived a merchant prince whose life was given to sin and dissipation. He gave a great feast. His sons, who were Christians, went into the room and wrote on the wall with a stick of phosphorus, "Prepare to meet thy God." The company arrived and were soon in deep carousal. As it grew late the candles went out, and the solemn message shone out upon the wall. The host was astonished and then alarmed, and, calling for his sons, announced his determination to leave his sins and prepare to meet his God.

Illustration 130. Laying up treasures. Three men were talking together after the Chicago fire. One of them said, "Thank God, there was some of my money placed where it could not burn." As he turned away one of the others said to his companion, "That man gave away last year nearly a million dollars, and if I had not been a fool I should have done the same."

26. Besides all this—Even if the granting of the request were not unjust, it would be impracticable. **Great gulf**—The Greek word is "chasm," which is allied to our word "yawn," and indicates a canyon-like opening, with steep walls and profound depth. So the line between good and evil, which men may easily cross on earth, in eternity widens to an impassable gulf. **Would pass . . . to you**—"You" is plural; you and your companions. In life the wicked are permitted to mingle freely with the righteous; in the other world the righteous are not permitted to mingle with and minister to the wicked.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:	27 over from thence to us. And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house;
28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.	28 for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into
29 A'bra-ham saith unto him, ^s They have Mo'ses and the prophets; let them hear them.	29 this place of torment. But A'bra-ham saith, They have Mo'ses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay,
30 And he said, Nay, father A'bra-ham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.	30 father A'bra-ham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Mo'ses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.
31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Mo'ses and the prophets, ^s neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.	

^s Isa. 8. 20; 34. 16; John 5. 39, 45; Acts 15. 21; 17. 11. — ^sJohn 12. 10, 11.

Illustration 131. "The scene brought before us is like one of the pictures of *Dante's* 'Commedia'—steep rocks and a deep gorge; on one side the flames that burn and do not consume, and on the other the fair garden of paradise and the kingly palace, and the banquet at which Abraham presides. And those that are bearing the penalty or reaping the reward of their life are within sight and hearing of each other, and hold conversation and debate. It is obvious that no single detail of such a description can be pressed as a literal representation of the unseen world. What was wanted for the purpose of the parable was the dramatic and pictorial vividness which impresses itself on the minds and hearts of men, and this could not otherwise be gained."—*Plumptre*.

III. OUR LORD'S VIEW OF THE HUMAN HEART. VERSES 27-31.

27. I pray thee therefore—Whenever in Scripture we come to a "therefore" we should find out "wherefore." This means, "in view of the facts just stated, that no relief can come to one in this place, and that no one can escape from it into paradise." **Send him to my father's house**—This man had a tender desire to save others.

28. Five brethren—They were thought of as younger brethren, probably. He had not while in life anticipated torment and Abraham's inability to help him beyond the grave; he fears his brethren are as careless of their opportunities for repentance (verse 30) as he had been. **Testify**—The Greek word indicates solemn testimony. Lazarus would say: "You know me; you know that I died; I will tell you what I have seen; I have seen your deceased brother in torments and unable to escape; if you do not by God's help change your life you will be brought into the same state of torment when you die."

29. Moses and the prophets—"Moses" means the law of Moses. That law held before all careful listeners a lofty ideal of love toward God and man; the prophets gave clear warnings as to the consequences of unfaithfulness to Creator and creature. Moses had shown more impressive tokens of divine authority and had given more convincing testimony to the law of righteousness than Lazarus could show or give.

30. Nay—No, they will give no more heed to the warnings of Scripture than I did. **From the dead**—The Jews were by nature exceedingly susceptible to the marvelous, and a messenger from the dead would be peculiarly impressive. But the rich man did not perceive that the same incredulity and indifference with which his brothers received the Scriptures would be natural to them in the presence of a living person who should claim to give personal testimony about the unseen world.

31. Persuaded—"The rich man had said, 'They will repent.' Abraham replies, 'They will not be even persuaded.'"—*M. R. Vincent*. Infidelity and humble faith in God are alike produced, in most instances, not by outward circumstances, but by a man's own decision. There are few men, indeed, who have not within handy reach all the means necessary to secure their salvation. They who spurn God's word would sneer at a voice from the grave. "This was most remarkably exemplified in the results which followed the raising of another

Lazarus (John 12. 10), and the resurrection of our Lord himself (Matt. 28. 11-13).”—*Farrar*. The future life will depend upon the use which is made in the present life of the opportunities of salvation. A man's choices determine his character, not his chances. Even without “the law and the prophets” an unenlightened heathen may choose that which is good, and his blind gropings after virtue will be regarded by God. But law, prophets, Gospel, and ghostly warnings, all added together, will not of themselves alter the conduct of the man whose evil heart has chosen evil.

Illustration 132. “Mamma,” said a little child, “my Sunday school teacher tells me that this world is only a place in which God lets us live a while, that we may prepare for a better world. But, mother, I don't see anybody preparing. I see you preparing to go into the country, and Eliza is preparing to come here; but I don't see anyone preparing to go there. Why don't you get ready?”

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

If there is any subject in which the mind of man feels a deep interest it is that of the future life. Does death end all? Is there a life beyond the grave? What are the conditions and characteristics of that life? These are the questions that every soul of man asks. There is but one book which gives us trustworthy information on these topics, and that one book is the Bible, which is sent to us as God's revelation. In that book the highest of all information comes from the lips of the God-man, who, as Lord of both worlds, the visible and the invisible, can tell us the laws of both. Christ used the parable as the vehicle of instruction, because by it he could arrest attention, quicken thought, and impress the memory with the truth. When he would inform his hearers about the world beyond he told a story about that world. We have seen other stories having their scene laid in the eternal world. For example, “The Little Pilgrim,” by *Mrs. Oliphant*; “The Gates Ajar,” by *Miss Phelps*; “Letters from Hell,” a fearfully vivid work of the imagination, and other books. But all these are merely guesses, imaginings, theorizings. **When Christ speaks he speaks with authority.** What does he tell us in this parable about the other world?

I. He tells us that there is a world beyond the grave. Death does not end all. A man's life goes on when he goes out of life. Our life is a path which leads into the dark, but it does not end where it seems to end. It enters within the veil. Our departed friends, then, are not blotted out of existence; they are somewhere.

II. He tells us that in that world men retain their conscious existence. They are not sleeping away the years. Lazarus is alive, and so is the rich man, and so is Abraham. They think and talk, and are susceptible of pain and of pleasure.

III. He tells us that in that world there are two states or conditions which are widely different from each other. Both are in the world which the Revised Version calls Hades; a word which in the old version was translated “hell,” but which means the place of departed spirits in general. That Hades world has two states, one of blessedness, the other of misery; one for the good, the other for the evil.

IV. He tells us that the conditions of men here and hereafter are often reversed. Men poor here may be rich hereafter; and men rich here may be poor and wretched hereafter. Yet we are not to suppose that Lazarus is happy in Hades *because* he was a beggar on earth; nor that Dives is poor in the other world *because* he was rich in this. On earth Abraham was rich too, but he did not share the fate of the rich man in this parable. In this life the distinctions between men are those of circumstances;

PREPARATION FOR HEAVEN.	
THEY HAD MOSES, PROPHETS.	WE HAVE MOSES, PROPHETS, CHRIST.
HEAR THEM AND BE PREPARED.	

in that life the distinction is one of character. "Man judgeth by the outward appearance; but God judgeth the heart."

V. He tells us that the present life holds the key to the future life. Because the rich sinner did not repent on earth he is lost in eternity. And those who read God's message and follow it shall have their reward hereafter. We are to seek our guidance, not from dreams or disembodied spirits, but from the Scriptures, and in them we find the way of salvation.



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS IV AND V.

Christ teaches his disciples to avoid occasions of offense, and to forgive one another (Luke 17. 1-4). Verses 5-10 of LESSON V were probably spoken in close connection with the words which precede them in the first four verses. The next incidents we have in the life of Jesus, so far as we can make out its proper chronological order, were: 1. The raising of Lazarus (John 11. 1-46). 2. The withdrawal to Ephraim (John 11. 47-54). 3. Then came the incident of the ten lepers narrated in the last part of LESSON V.



LESSON V.—MAY 3.

FAITH.—LUKE 17. 5-19.

[Read Luke 17. 1-37.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Increase our faith.—Luke 17. 5.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Probably A. D. 30.

DIGEST OF THE CHAPTER.—The Lesson Committee wisely recommends, in connection with the study of LESSON V, the careful reading of the entire chapter (Luke 17. 1-37). The following digest may help the student to grasp its contents: (1) The Master's teaching on the subject of the injury worked on the souls of others by our sins (verses 1-4) leads (2) the disciples to pray for an increase of faith, that they may be kept from such sins (verse 5). (3) The Lord replies by similes of the mustard seed and the sycamine tree; and (4) by a little parable on humility (verses 6-10). (5) Then comes the healing of the ten lepers and the ingratitude of all save one (verses 11-19). This ends our lesson. The remainder of the chapter records (6) the question of the Pharisees as to the coming of the kingdom, and the Lord's answer (verses 20, 21); (7) also his teaching respecting the awful suddenness of the advent of the Son of man (verses 22-37).

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD.—It is very likely that self-sufficient comments made by the disciples in connection with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and overheard by Jesus, led to the administration of the severe rebuke contained in verses 3 and 4. He warns them that while they must be ever ready to fearlessly rebuke vice and selfishness, they must never tire in the exercise of forgiveness. They feel how unable they are to perform the difficult and responsible part he assigns them, and call out for an increase of faith.

TEACHING OF THIS LESSON CONCERNING FAITH AND HUMILITY.—There is only one way to increase faith, and that is by obedience to the Master's will in patience and humility. The Lord has made oil by the cruseful, and wine by the water-jarful, but there is no miraculous increase of faith on record. These men were looking, as *Dean Plumptre* beautifully says, "for the crown of labor before their work was done, for the wreath of the conqueror before they had fought the battle."

A WORD ABOUT THE MIRACLE.—"In the midst of these conflicts with the Pharisees there occurs a most notable miracle, which seems to have escaped their criticism. Narrated in a connection where the order of thought appears to be somewhat disturbed (Luke 17. 1-10), the relation of this incident to our preceding lessons may still with some confidence be affirmed. This quick compassion toward, and prompt relief of, the ten men whom a dreadful form of death in life had excluded from among their fellows, what is it but one more manifestation of the divine love which had just defended itself so nobly for its living and wholesome sympathy with those waifs of Jewish society, the publicans and sinners? (Luke 15. 1, 2.) It would seem from verses 20, 21, that the Pharisees witnessed this miracle; but its merciful character, its splendid spiritual power, its acknowledgment of the priestly prerogative, and the fact that it was not wrought on the Sabbath, would for once restrain even them from finding fault. They would have still another motive for silence when reminded, as they had been in the parable of the good Samaritan, that the most notable examples of devotion to God are to be found, not merely among the professionally religious orders, but among the despised classes of society. Here was a Samaritan who loved God with all his heart, just as the other in the parable loved his neighbor as himself (Luke 10. 29). Once more, therefore, are the proud rulers warned, as they had been by John the Baptist three years before, that God was able to raise up children to Abraham outside of Israel (Luke 3. 8)."—*Buell.*

LESSON HYMN.—

O happy day that fixed my choice On thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice, And tell its raptures all abroad.
O happy bond, that seals my vows To him who merits all my love!
Let cheerful anthems fill his house, While to that sacred shrine I move.
Now rest, my long-divided heart; Fixed on this blissful center, rest:
Nor ever from thy Lord depart, With him of every good possessed.—*Doddridge.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (April 27), Faith, Luke 17. 5-19. *Tuesday*, The law of cleansing, Lev. 14. 21-32. *Wednesday*, Naaman cured, 2 Kings 5. 8-14. *Thursday*, Confident trust, Psalm 27. *Friday* (May 1), Faith and sight, John 20. 24-31. *Saturday*, Both able and willing, Mark 1. 35-45. *Sunday*, Heroes of faith, Heb. 11. 32-40.

Authorized Version.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 ¹ And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the

Revised Version.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, In-

crease our faith. And the Lord said, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamine tree, Be

¹ Matt. 17. 20; 21. 21; Mark 9. 23; 11. 23.

I. A LESSON ON FAITH. VERSES 5, 6.

5. The apostles said unto the Lord.—"The command of a sevenfold, that is, an unlimited forgiveness, seems to make almost too great a strain on their faith. Did it not imply an almost miraculous victory over natural impulses, that could be wrought only by a supernatural grace?"—*Plumptre.* To their carnal minds it would be easier to "remove mountains" than to reproduce the pardoning love of the Father as Christ portrayed that love. **Increase our faith.**—Literally, "Add to us faith." It is a cry that has often been repeated by feeble but longing disciples of the Christ: "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."

6. And the Lord said.—His reply to this prayer reaches from the sixth verse to the tenth. **If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed.**—"Which is the least of all seeds" (Matt. 13. 32). It is as if Jesus said, "If ye had any faith at all, of the real sort." **Ye might say unto this sycamine tree.**—Evidently our Lord and his disciples were in the open air, and he pointed to the tree as he spoke: *this* tree. The sycamine is not the same as the sycamore, but the black

Authorized Version.

root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

² Chap. 12, 37.

Revised Version.

thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea; and it would have obeyed you. But who is there of you, having a ¹servant plowing or keeping sheep, that will say unto him, when he is come in from the field, Come straightway and sit down to meat; and will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank the ¹servant because he did the things that were commanded?

¹ Gr. *bond servant*.

mulberry, still called *sycamenea* in Greece. It is cultivated in different parts of Palestine, both for its fruit and as supplying food for silkworms. In Matt. 17. 20 we have a similar statement, only that "this mountain" (probably Mount Hermon) takes the place of "this tree." Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea—Perhaps the most unnatural command that could be given to a tree. And it should obey you—This teaching, like many of our Lord's, is couched in what the rhetoricians call hyperbole, an evident exaggeration of form; but it is no exaggeration of the truth. Faith can remove all obstacles.

LESSON ON HUMILITY. VERSES 7-10.



"SITTING DOWN TO MEAT."

7, 8. Which of you, etc.—These two verses contain our Lord's answer to the disciples' request to increase their faith. It is as if he had said (verses 5, 6), Even a very little faith (if it be genuine) will be sufficient to keep you from offending against love and charity. This little parable was to teach them that they were not to look to accomplish great things by a strong faith given to them in a

moment of time, but they were to labor on patiently and bravely, and afterward, as in the parable story, they, too, should eat and drink. It was to show them that in the end they should receive that higher faith they prayed for, which was to be the reward for patient, faithful toil. And gird thyself, and serve me—It is scarcely wise, as we have before remarked, to press each separate detail of the Lord's parables. Zeller, quoted by Stier, "makes, however, an application of this to the 'inner world of the heart,' in which there is no going straightway to sit down at table when a man comes from his external calling and sphere of labor, but we must gird ourselves to serve the Lord, and so prepare ourselves for the time when he will receive us to his supper."

9. Doth he thank that servant—"The words are spoken, of course, from the standpoint of the old relations between the master and the slave, in which service would be taken as a thing of course, without even the conventional thanks of modern life; not from that of those who recognize that master and slave are alike children of the same Father and servants of the

Authorized Version.

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are ³unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

11 And it came to pass, ⁴as he went to Je-ru'sa-lem, that he passed through the midst of Sa-ma'ri-a and Gal'i-lee.

Revised Version.

10 Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable ²servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.

11 And it came to pass, ³as they were on the way to Je-ru'sa-lem, that he was passing ⁴through the midst of Sa-ma'ri-a and

² Job 22. 3; 35. 7; Psalm 16. 2; Matt. 25. 30; Rom. 3. 12; 11. 35; 1 Cor. 9. 16; Philen. 11.—⁴ Luke 9. 51, 52; John 4. 4.

³ Gr. *bond servants*.—² Or, *as he was*.—⁴ Or, *between*.

same Master. In order to understand their bearing we must remember how the subtle poison of self-righteousness was creeping into even the souls of the disciples, leading them to ask, 'What shall we have, therefore?' (Matt. 19. 27,) and to ask for high places in the kingdom (Matt. 20. 21). They needed to be taught humility even though the lesson came in the form of apparent harshness."—*Plumptre*.

10. **When ye shall have done all**—And this can never be (Psalm 143. 2). **We are unprofitable servants**—The same word for unprofitable occurs in Matt. 25. 30; Rom. 3. 12. "This verse, like many others (Isa. 64. 6; Rom. 3. 27), cuts at the root of the whole Romish notion as



A SERVANT PLOWING.

to the possibility of 'works of supererogation.'"—*Farrar*. "We sleep half our lives; we give God a tenth of our time; and yet we think that with our good works we can merit heaven. What have I been doing to-day? I have talked for two hours; I have been at meals three hours; I have been idle four hours. Ah! enter not into judgment with thy servant!"—*Luther*.

III. A LESSON ON GRATITUDE. VERSES 11-19.

11. **He went to Jerusalem**—The precise chronological position of this miracle cannot be given. But this is the third notice (Luke 9. 51; 13. 22) of the gradual progress which Jesus was making from Galilee. **Through the midst**—On the boundary line of the two provinces, with Samaria on the right and Galilee on the left. He was going southeastward toward the Jordan, which he crossed probably not far from Bethabara. **Samaria**—The middle province of Palestine west of the Jordan. It took its name from the ancient capital of the Ten Tribes. [See note on SAMARITANS, at end of this lesson.] The mention of Samaria probably explains the presence of the Samaritan leper (verse 16). **Galilee**—The northern division of Palestine, where most of Christ's life on earth was passed and most of his miracles were wrought. This was

Authorised Version.	Revised Version.
12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, ⁵ which stood afar off:	12 Gal'i-lee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that
13 And they lifted up <i>their</i> voices, and said, Je'sus, Master, have mercy on us.	13 were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, saying, Je'sus,
14 And when he saw <i>them</i> , he said unto them, ⁶ Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.	14 Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go and show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed.

⁵ Lev. 13. 46.—⁶ Lev. 13. 9; 14. 2; Matt. 8. 4; chap. 5. 14.

probably his final departure from his northern home to meet his foes and accomplish his sacrifice at Jerusalem.

12. As he entered—Outside the gates of oriental cities may be often seen a crowd of lepers, repulsive and loathsome, asking alms—"A sad emblem of those who behold the heavenly kingdom from which they are forever excluded." **Certain village**—Unknown. **There met him ten men**—They had possibly heard of his cure of the leper in Galilee (Luke 5. 12), and had learned, it may be from two of the seventy (Luke 10. 1), that Jesus was to pass through their village. They had no doubt discussed the possibility and the method of their cure for some time before Jesus's arrival. If they were not accustomed to keep together at other times they certainly had reason now for avoiding separation. They were certain that their united appeal would at least secure his attention. Even the most wretched seek companionship. Trouble makes men forget the enmities of race and creed; so Jewish and Samaritan lepers are found together. **Lepers**—Victims of a disease still known in Syria. It begins with an inflamed, flaky spot on the skin, which soon covers the body, and ends in the slow decay of the extremities, until at length death relieves the unhappy victim. It forms a strong type of the "disease of sin:" 1. It is hereditary. 2. It grows insidiously, without much pain. 3. It ruins and destroys. 4. It is foul and pollutive. 5. It is incurable by man. [See note on LEpers at the close of this lesson.] **Stood afar off**—Forbidden by law and custom to approach. Several forms of leprosy are believed to be contagious. In the East the sufferers are usually colonized together outside the city walls. They are required to warn people of their approach on the public roads. In the Sandwich Islands every leper is "tabooed."

13. Lifted up their voices—The tones of lepers are husky and their articulation indistinct. Observe that when Christ is near that is the hour for needy souls to find relief. Those who expect Christ to aid them must earnestly call upon him. **Jesus, Master**—They recognize him as a wonder-worker, and implore his help. To his personal name they added a title of respect. There was dignity in their appeal. It was more sincere than the "Good Master" of the young ruler (Luke 18. 18). **Have mercy on us**—They do not ask for alms as they would from ordinary rabbins. He knows what they want. The term "mercy" belongs to the vocabulary of prayer. They want help which God alone can bestow.

14. When he saw—He saw their *need*, their *desire*, and their *faith*, and that was enough to summon his power. **He said**—Shouted out, for by the law there must be one hundred paces between him and them. **Go show yourselves**—This was a remarkable test of their faith. These lepers, with their ghastly chalk-white faces, were required to act as if they were whole and pure; to go boldly to the priest and demand the privileges of health. Their Healer did not tell them that they were healed or that they were going to be healed. The purpose of going to the priests was to meet the ceremonial requirements made in the case of those who seemed to have had the disease, but who recovered. Note: 1. That Christ pays respect to the observances of the Church, even when the priests are his mortal enemies. 2. When our Lord heals men he does it in his own way, and demands their unquestioning obedience. **As they went**—It seems not to have occurred to these wretched men to doubt Jesus. Their faith

Authorized Version.

15 And ^{one} of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Sa-mar'i-tan.

17 And Je'sus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?

Revised Version.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice

16 glorifying God; and he fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was

17 a Sa-mar'i-tan. And Je'sus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but

† Isa. 38. 19.

was equal to the test, and God's salvation equal to their faith. **They were cleansed**—In the act of obedience their faith is rewarded by the healing. Each man feels a new vigor shooting through his own body, and each, looking on his fellow's face, sees the flush of health. The Greek gives the impression that the cure took place all at once in the case of each one of them.

15. One of them—Thus far the conduct of all these lepers, their earnestness, their faith, their obedience, is to be commended. But now comes a test of their love and gratitude. Nine



of them, intent only on the healing, care little for the Healer. They are impatient for the hour when by the word of the priest they shall be free from the yoke of a leper's life, and, forgetting the Wonder-worker, they hasten to the temple. Only one stops to think gratefully of His goodness who has wrought the wonderful change. **Turned back**—From his journey to the Samaritan village where he was to find the priests of his own nation, he came back to find Jesus; the priests could wait, but his Saviour was departing. **Loud voice**—In itself a proof of the healing. A leper's voice, as already noted, is hollow and feeble. **Glorified God**—Praised God for his goodness and mercy. He already had the spiritual intelligence which Jesus commended to the demoniac whom he had bade tell his friends what God had done for him and what mercy he had shown toward him (Mark 5. 19).

16. Fell down on his face—With a demonstrativeness truly oriental. **Giving him thanks**—He recognized the will of Jesus as having secured to him the divine blessing. **A Samaritan**—He therefore could not possess the knowledge and light which were within reach of the Jews.

17. Jesus answering—This does not mean that a question was addressed to Jesus, but that this affecting scene appealed to him and drew from him the following comment. **Were there not ten**—Rather, "Were not the ten cleansed?" He saw the work wrought, though it had not been wrought in his presence. **Where are the nine**—Why did they go on their way to Jerusalem without coming back to thank me? They all begged piteously enough for mercy

Authorized Version.

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.
 19 ^aAnd he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Revised Version.

18 where are the nine? ^bWere there none found that returned to give glory to God, 19 save this ^cstranger? And he said unto him, Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath ^dmade thee whole.

^a Matt. 9. 22; Mark 5. 34; 10. 52; chap. 7. 50; 8. 48; 18. 42.

^b Or, *There were none found . . . save this stranger.*—^c Or, *alien.*
^d Or, *saved thee.*

beforehand. He had not, indeed, told them to come back; but he was justified in expecting that they would spontaneously do so. They were infected by something far worse than leprosy—ingratitude. Of ten men in the same circumstances some exhibit feelings radically different from the rest. Every soul makes its own choice and exhibits its own character.

Illustration 133. "Many a physician has gained practice by one patient telling others of his cure. Tell your neighbors that you have been to the hospital of Jesus and have been restored. Let us not be like the nine lepers who received the blessing and gave him no praise."—*Spurgeon*.

18. There are not found—How few are those that realize God's goodness as manifested in their lives! **Save this stranger**—This "alien." One who was without the privileges of the chosen people, a stranger to their religious advantages. It would not have been so singular if he had neglected coming back to the Jewish prophet. But Christ did not withdraw the blessing of health from the ingrates, or curse them again with leprosy.

19. Go thy way—To the priests, but in his case probably to the Samaritan priests at Gerizim. **Thy faith hath made thee whole**—Larger faith than that exhibited by the nine brought not only physical restoration, but probably wholeness of his moral being also—holiness of heart.

Illustration 134. An interesting incident is told of King Alphonso X, surnamed "the Wise." On learning that his pages neglected to ask the divine blessing on their daily meals, he determined to rebuke them. He invited the pages of his court to dine with him. A bountiful repast was spread, and when they were assembled around the table the king gave a sign that all was in readiness for them to begin. They all enjoyed the rich feast, but not one remembered to ask God's blessing on the food. Just then there entered a poor ragged beggar, who unceremoniously seated himself at the royal table and ate and drank undisturbed to his heart's content. Astonishment was depicted on every face. The pages expected momentarily that his majesty would order away the audacious intruder. Alphonso kept silence while the beggar ate all he desired. When his hunger and thirst were appeased he arose, and, without a word of thanks, departed from the palace. "What a despicably mean fellow!" cried the boys. Calmly the good king rose, and with much earnestness said: "Boys, bolder and more audacious than this beggar have you all been. Every day you sit down to a table supplied by the bounty of your heavenly Father, yet you ask not his blessing nor express to him your gratitude."

Illustration 135. An African chief came to a missionary, reproached himself for ingratitude, and asked the missionary to fix a day for religious worship. Then he said to his people: "Now let us show gratitude by offerings, to send the Gospel farther on. I will give an ox." Eighty sheep were contributed, and four hundred persons brought grain in bags and baskets. This was the very practical way they gave thanks for their salvation.

Illustration 136. Faith is taking God at his word. A little girl who had been told that her grandfather would grant her requests led him to a corner of the room, and, without saying a word, pointed to the floor where she had arranged her blocks to spell out, "Grandpa, I want a box of paints." The next day, when he went to see her, she, without looking to see if her wish had been granted, took him to the same corner, where she had spelled out, "Grandpa, I thank you for the box of paints." That was faith.

THE SAMARITANS.

"The city of Samaria (the modern Sebastieh) first comes into notice as built by Omri to be the capital of Israel (1 Kings 16. 23, 24). It continued to occupy that position till its capture by Shalmanezzer, B. C. 721. After the deportation of the ten tribes Esar-haddon (Ezra 4. 2-10), after the manner of many great monarchs of the East, brought a mingled race from Babylon and Cuthah and Ava and Hamath and Sepharvaim (2 Kings 17. 24) to occupy the district

thus left depopulated, and from these the Samaritans of later history were descended. They were accordingly of alien blood, and their neighbors of Judea kept up the memory of their foreign origin by speaking of them as Cutheans.

"Under the influence of a priest of Israel, sent by the King of Assyria, they became worshippers of Jehovah (2 Kings 17. 41), and on the return of Judah and Benjamin from the captivity they sought to be admitted as coreligionists to share with them in the rebuilding of the temple, and therefore to obtain like privileges as worshipers in its courts. That claim was, however, refused, and they in return (B. C. 409), guided by Manasseh, a priest who had been expelled from Jerusalem by Nehemiah for an unlawful marriage with the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (Neh. 13. 28), obtained permission from the Persian king Artaxerxes to erect a temple on Mount Gerizim. *Josephus*, it should be added, places the whole story much later, in the time of Darius Codomanus and Alexander the Great.

"The new worship thus started placed them at once in the position of a rival and schismatical sect, and after their history presented the usual features of such antagonism. They refused all hospitality to pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, and would waylay and maltreat them. They mocked the more distant Jews by false signals of the rising of the paschal moon. They found their way into the temple and profaned it by scattering dead men's bones on the pavement. Outrages of this kind rankled in the memory of the Jews, and they, in their turn, looked on the Samaritans as worse than heathen, 'had no dealings with them' (John 4. 9), cursed them in their synagogues, and even the wise of heart among them, like the Son of Sirach, named them as people that they abhorred (Ecclus. 50. 25, 26). Probably in consequence of this bitter hostility the Samaritans became more and more jealous in their observance of the law, boasted that they possessed the authentic copy of it, substituting Gerizim for Ebal in Deut. 27. 4 to support its claim to sanctity, and maintained that it, and not the temple at Jerusalem, was the chosen sanctuary of Jehovah. They, too, were looking for the Messiah, who would come as a prophet and tell them all things (John 4. 25).

"Such was the relative position of the two races at the time of our Lord's ministry, and we cannot wonder that he should have shrunk (if we may so speak) from bringing his disciples at the outset of their work into contact with a people who hated all Jews, and whom all Jews had learned to hate in return. He himself, however, had not shrunk from that contact; and some few of the disciples, at all events, had at an early period of his work learned that he saw in them those whom he owned as the sheep of his flock, though not of that fold."—*Plumptre*.

Dr. Edersheim believes that some of the original Israelitish stock remained in the land when the first foreign colonists of Samaria arrived. Fugitives from Assyrian captivity and apostates and rebels against the order of things established by Ezra and Nehemiah served to greatly increase this "mixed multitude." The hatred by the later Jews of the Samaritans can hardly be exaggerated; nevertheless Jewish rabbis differed widely as to how they should be treated; and contact with them does not seem to have been as ceremonially defiling as it was sentimentally abhorred.

LEPERS IN PALESTINE.

There is among the lepers in Palestine a state of morals as horrible as contemptible. The lepers are mostly fellahin (Moslem and Christian), and it is very seldom that Jews are victims of this foul living death. The disease is not always directly hereditary, but if it is in the family it is generally found that some one or other of the relatives in former generations has been affected by it. A man may be a leper while his brothers and sisters and parents are free; but inquiry brings to light the fact that the brother of his grandmother was leprous. His children may be clean, but one of his grandchildren will develop the disease.

Certain villages (for instance Ramallah, near Beereh, about three hours north of Jerusalem) are notorious for the number of lepers. In former years the lepers of Jerusalem lived in a number of hovels inside the city walls at Zion Gate. Now they herd together in a build-

ing appointed by the government for their residence near Joab's Well. The alms they collect are shared in common.

The lepers' hospital was several years ago removed to a new airy building named "Jesus Hilf," on the Rephaim plain. The pasha of Jerusalem, who was present when the new structure was formally opened, promised to use his influence to compel all lepers to reside there, where not only medical aid is rendered, but especial care is taken to direct the sufferers to Him who alone can cure the leprosy of the soul.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

Here are two separate incidents, yet linked together by a strong chain, for both are concerning *faith*.

I. Faith's Victory. Verses 5, 6. Of course, this is not to be taken literally, for God works through natural law. But the history of the Church, ancient and modern, shows the power of faith in ways as marvelous, and every converted sinner is a miracle.

II. Faith's Fidelity. Verses 7-9. True faith will inspire faithfulness and make of us loyal servants of our Master, doing our duty. "The trivial round, the common task," will give opportunities for the noblest faith; for the believer sees his Master's eye ever upon him.

III. Faith's Humility. Verse 10. The true believer recognizes his own unworthiness, and realizes that at best he has done no more than his duty, that he has fallen short of the divine ideal and deserves no praise for his good deeds. Whoever is saved is saved by the mercy of God and the merit of Christ.

IV. Faith's Reward. Verses 7-10. Though we deserve to be treated as servants, yet our Master does not thus treat us. He draws the contrast between man's dealing and God's dealing. He bids us to sup with him; he promises even to wait on us. See Luke 12. 37, and references; also Rev. 3. 20, 21.

V. Faith's Prayer. Verses 11-13. It was faith in Jesus that inspired the supplication of these lepers. They saw in him the mighty Healer; they felt their need, and they believed that he could help them. In this miracle is a parable of salvation.

VI. Faith's Test. Verse 14. While still leprous they were to act as though they had been cleansed; were to go to the priest and obtain a "clean bill of health."

Here was a test of faith; but they endured the test and were healed. Here again is a picture of the way in which men are saved from sin, by walking out in faith on the promise of God.

VII. Faith's Gratitude. Verses 15-19. The nine have their followers among Christians, no less than the tenth. What proportion of those who are saved are willing to testify publicly to God's grace and mercy? How few are those in attendance upon the prayer meeting, and of those how few bear witness! Let us be like the one, and not like the nine.

FAITH TAUGHT.

DISCIPLES' REQUEST.

INCREASE OUR FAITH.

THE LORD'S RESPONSE.

ALL THINGS POSSIBLE TO FAITH.

ALL OUR WORKS ARE BUT

DOING
OF
DUTY.

"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD."

FAITH EXEMPLIFIED.

TEN LEPCRS | WHOSEVER WILL
CRY TO JESUS

FOR

MERCY.

THEY WERE | WILL BE

HEARD.
HEALED.

"FAITH HATH MADE THEE WHOLE."

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS V AND VI.

1. Our Lord teaches concerning the kingdom of God and the coming of the Son of man (Luke 17. 20-37). 2. Parable of the importunate widow (Luke 18. 1-8). 3. Then comes the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, to be found in the first six verses of LESSON VI. 4. Next come our Lord's words concerning divorce (Matt. 19. 3-12; Mark 10. 2-12). And then, in order of time, the blessing of little children, with which the lesson closes.



LESSON VI.—MAY 10.

LESSONS ON PRAYER.—LUKE 18. 9-17.

[Study the whole chapter, Luke 18.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.—Luke 18. 13.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Probably A. D. 30.

PLACE.—Somewhere on the journey from Perea to Jerusalem.

JESUS GAVE HIS DISCIPLES TWO parables on prayer. The first parable has received two very different expositions—one individual, the other general. Both expositions contain truth, and neither should be urged to the exclusion of the other. The second parable was addressed to some of the disciples who, despite their Lord's teachings, were manifesting the spirit of self-righteousness and contempt for others less favored. He rebukes them by the picture of the Pharisee and the publican, the one boasting, the other confessing; the one going home unconscious that he has added to the weight of his condemnation, the other with heart light in the assurance of divine grace.

LESSON HYMN.

Prayer is appointed to convey The blessings God designs to give;
Long as they live should Christians pray; They learn to pray when first they live.
'Tis prayer supports the soul that's weak, Though thought be broken, language lame;
Pray, if thou canst or canst not speak; But pray with faith in Jesus' name.
Depend on him; thou canst not fail; Make all thy wants and wishes known;
Fear not; his merits must prevail: Ask but in faith, it shall be done.—*Joseph Hart.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (May 4), Lessons on Prayer, Luke 18. 1-8. *Tuesday*, Lessons on Prayer, Luke 18. 9-17. *Wednesday*, Unacceptable prayer, Isa. 1. 10-20. *Thursday*, Penitent prayer, Neh. 1. *Friday*, Humility in prayer, Psalm 25. 1-14. *Saturday*, Prayer for pardon, Psalm 51. 1-18. *Sunday*, As little children, Matt. 18. 1-6.

Authorized Version.

9 And he spake this parable unto certain
1 which trusted in themselves that they were
righteous, and despised others:

Revised Version.

9 And he spake also this parable unto
certain which trusted in themselves that
they were righteous, and set 1 all others at

¹ Chap. 10. 29; 16. 15.—a Or, as being righteous.

¹ Gr. the rest.

I. THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS SPIRIT. VERSES 9-12.

9. **This parable.**—Having taught earnestness and persistence in praying, Jesus would now teach humility. **Unto certain.**—Or, “concerning certain.” The parable was addressed perhaps to sympathizers and followers of Jesus who retained a self-righteous spirit. See Luke 19. 7. **Trusted in themselves that they were righteous.**—Trusted in their own habits of de-

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phar'i-see, and the other a publican.	10 naught: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phar'i-see, and the
11 The Phar'i-see ² stood and prayed thus with himself, ³ God, I thank thee, that I am not	11 other a publican. The Phar'i-see stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank

² Psahn 135. 2.—³ Isa. 1. 15; 58. 2; Rev. 3. 17.

votion. Unfortunately there are not wanting in modern times people who manifest conspicuous pride in what they deem the exceptional character of their consecration, and who set all others at naught. They see no righteousness but their own. See Luke 15. 2; Prov. 30. 12; Isa. 65. 5. Those who compare themselves with their fellow-men, and find few better, but many worse, are in danger of supposing that God's standard is like their own. **Despised others**—No man is a true Christian who despises others, no matter how degraded the others may be. The Pharisees were accustomed to speak of the mass of their brother Israelites as "the people of the earth," that is, brutes. "An old Jewish saying is quoted, that a true rabbin ought to thank God every day of his life: 1. That he was not created a Gentile. 2. That he was not a publican. 3. That he was not born a woman."—*M. R. Vincent.*

10. Two men—Each a type of a class found in the Church in every age. **Went up**—The temple stood on ground higher than most of the city around it. **To pray**—Dwellers in and around Jerusalem generally worshiped once or twice each day in the Court of the Women, facing the altar, which could be seen within. The law of association is one of the best helps to devotion. Regularity in time and place should be observed; nevertheless, with the advantage come two dangers—of a tendency to formalism and of a tendency to superstition. **A Pharisee**—With his holy blue fringe on his garments, and his prayers and Scripture passages (phylacteries) fastened on his brow and arm. For a fuller note on THE PHARISEES see page 49. **A publican**—In working dress; in his eyes that inexpressibly sad look which always comes to the countenance of the man who is held in general contempt. A "publican" was a taxgatherer, especially one who collected the tribute which was the token of subjection to the Roman rule. The usual ancient method of collecting tribute was for one person to pay the tax of the entire district, and then to reimburse himself and make an enormous profit by subletting the taxes to subordinate publicans, who assessed the property holders at their own will and collected in their own way. Thus there was abundant opportunity for corruption, extortion, and bribery at every stage of the process of gathering the tribute. The publicans were thoroughly hated by the Jews, both as the instruments of a foreign despotism and for their own vices. They were deemed the vilest of men, and as a class deserved their bad reputation. Yet, conscious of their own sinfulness, many of them eagerly accepted the gracious words of Christ.

11. Stood—Standing was the customary Jewish attitude of prayer. The Greek conveys the idea of taking a careful and formal attitude, as is the custom of modern Mohammedans when they pray. The condition of the heart is of more consequence than that of the body. "The best position for prayer is that in which we can best pray."—*Arnot.* **Prayed thus**—In Greek, "went on with his prayer." Only a specimen of the thoughts with which he occupied himself is given. He prayed only in the sense that his thoughts took the outward form of prayer; in reality he went through a long self-laudatory soliloquy. The Pharisees prayed long (Luke 20. 47). **With himself**—He formed the following sentences in mind, not venturing to utter them aloud. The sincerity of the man made him all the more despicable. It was like the sincerity of the fool, who also said something to himself, to wit, that there is no God. But some scholars give another turn to the passage by translating it, "Standing by himself he prayed," which is the order of the words in the original. He stood apart from the other worshippers, as being superior to them. *Dr. Curry* renders it thus, "And the Pharisee, standing, for himself prayed these things." It is a question of punctuation. **God**—Better, "O God!" **I thank thee**—Thanks, but not real thankfulness; gratitude to God in his words, depreciation

Authorized Version.

“as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Revised Version.

thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this

* Isa. 65. 5; Matt. 3. 7, 10; 19. 18, 20; chap. 20. 47; Gal. 2. 10; Phil. 2. 6; James 2. 9, 12.



“PRAYING.”

of men in his heart. It sounds well as he begins: “God, I thank thee;” it is as if he had *received* and was grateful. Yet even in his thanksgiving (if we may call it so) there are three great errors: 1. He compares himself with other men, “Not as other men *are*, or even as this publican;” a dangerous plan, saying, “I’m not so bad as so and so.” See 2 Cor. 10. 21. 2. He trusts to what he is *not*—“not” an extortioner, etc. Another dangerous plan:

the question is, what we *are*. Does a sick man tell the doctor of all the diseases he has *not* got? 3. He boasts of his good deeds. A dangerous plan again. See James 2. 10; Luke 17. 10. **Other men**—Revised Version, “The rest of men.” He divides mankind into two classes: 1. Me; 2. The rest. The more accurate translation of the Revised Version shows still more strikingly how narrow and bitter the Pharisaic spirit was. The “Pharisee’s

prayer” in itself was not wrong. We are bound to thank God when we have been kept from sin. Every Christian young man and woman should join in this thanksgiving of the Pharisee every morning of his life; but it should be offered, not in his spirit, but in the spirit of the publican. **Extortioners, etc.**—The worst of it all is that, so far as we can learn from the writers of the day, this Pharisee was substantially correct in his estimate of what other men were. There was a current proverb—“Six publicans, half-a-dozen extortioners.” It is not at all certain that he was not himself the very kind of man he described all other men as being. At all events the crimes he mentions here are exactly those which the Master charged against his sect in Matt. 23 and John 8. “But our Lord warns us not only against the sins of the Pharisee; against his righteousness also: ‘Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ Now, the righteousness of the Pharisees is described here by a Pharisee himself. We find it was twofold: 1. It consisted in doing no harm to others. 2. In attending all the ordinances of God then established in the Jewish economy; and in these things they were not like other men, the bulk of the inhabitants of the land paying comparatively little attention to them. That the Pharisees were in their origin a pure and holy people can admit of little doubt; but that they had awfully degenerated before our Lord’s time is sufficiently evident. They had lost the spirit of their institution, and retained nothing else than its external regulations.”—*Clarke*. **Even as this publican**—Who had very likely been an unscrupulous, greedy man. But what sort of a spirit had this Pharisee, who through the sides of his eyes saw the contrite publican beating his breast in anguish, without a touch of pity or a disposition to say a word of comfort? How different in its sentiment is this prayer from the one which Jesus had given his disciples! (Luke 11. 2-4.) That prayer inculcates a forgiving spirit, etc., even toward those who have wronged us. Compare the Lord’s Prayer and the Pharisee’s prayer in other details (Gal. 6. 3, 4).

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.	12 publican. I fast twice in the week; I give
13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as <i>his</i> eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.	13 tithes of all that I get. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, ^{be} merciful to me
* Or, be propitiated.	

12. Twice in the week—On the second and fifth days (or, as we would say, every Monday and Thursday). The law required a fast but once a year, on the Day of Atonement; but the Pharisees, like modern Roman Catholics, taught the doctrine of “supererogation”—that they could make God their debtor by extra good works. **I give tithes of all**—“All that I acquire.” “The tithe was a tax on produce, not on property. He does not think, as Job did in his boasting mood, that he had been ‘a father to the poor,’ and had ‘made the widow’s heart to sing for joy’ (Job 29. 13-16), nor look back, as Nehemiah looked, upon good deeds done for his country (Neh. 13 & 14, 22-31) in the work of reformation. For him fasting and tithes have come to supersede the ‘weightier matters of the law’ (Matt. 23. 23).”—*Plumptre*. “Here too he exceeds the written law, which only commands tithes of corn, wine, oil, and cattle (Deut. 14. 22, 23), and not of mint, anise, and cummin (Matt. 23. 23). The fact that he does not say anything about his sins shows how low was his standard. ‘He that covereth his sins shall not prosper’ (Prov. 28. 13). He was clothed with phylacteries and fringes, not with humility (1 Peter 5. 5). But even though quite sincere, and scrupulously observant of every point, great or small—so fulfilling the whole of ‘the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees’—yet could he not be justified; that could be attained to only ‘through grace by faith.’”—*Curry*.

Illustration 137. “The reason assigned for the selection of Mondays and Thursdays as fast days is because it was supposed to be on the second day of the week that Moses went up into Mount Sinai to receive the two tables of the law, and it was on the fifth day of the week that he came down on account of the idolatry concerning the golden calf. These days were chosen not only when public fasts were to be observed, but also when individuals fasted privately.”—*Freeman*.

II. THE PENITENT SPIRIT. VERSES 13, 14.

13. Standing afar off—Not the same Greek form as that in verse 11. The man is too absorbed to think of his posture. Like the Pharisee, he stood apart; but, unlike the Pharisee, because he felt himself unworthy to draw near to others whom he honestly believed to be better than himself. He might have been insulted if he had come nearer, for publicans were held in universal contempt. In his past acts he *may* have been the greatest sinner, but the moral distance between any two sinners is very small as compared with their common distance from a holy God. **Would not lift up . . . his eyes**—The Jew in praying stood with arms outspread, palms upturned, and eyes raised. **Smote upon his breast**—A natural action for an oriental in anguish. He was not so calm and complacent as the Pharisee. **Be merciful**—Cast me not away from thy presence, but forgive my sins. **Sinner**—The definite article in the Greek shows that the publican thinks of a sinful life as his chief characteristic. “The Pharisee had singled himself out as the most eminent of saints; so the publican singled himself out as ‘the sinner’—the man in whom all sins meet.”—*Trench*.

Illustration 138. *Morier* gives an interesting account of the ceremonies observed annually in Persia in commemoration of the death of Hossein, the grandson of Mohammed, who was slain. One part of the ceremonies consists in beating the breasts as a token of grief. *Morier* says: “In front of the palace a circle of the king’s own tribe were standing barefooted and beating their breasts in cadence to the chanting of one who stood in the center, and with whom they now and then joined their voices in chorus. Smiting the breast is a universal act throughout this mourning; and the breast is made bare for that purpose by unbuttoning the top of the shirt.”

Illustration 139. It is related of the dying Grotius, one of the wisest and best of men, that when this parable was read to him he said, “I am that publican.”

Authorized Version.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: ^afor every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

15 ^bAnd they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them.

16 But Je'sus called them *unto him*, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for ^cof such is the kingdom of God.

17 ^dVerily I say unto you, Whosoever shall

Revised Version.

14 ^aa sinner. I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

15 And they brought unto him also their babes, that he should touch them: but when the disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them.

16 But Je'sus called them unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the

17 kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you,

^a Job 29. 29; Matt. 23. 12; chap. 14. 11; James 4. 6; 1 Peter 5. 5, 6. — ^b Matt. 19. 13; Mark 10. 13. — ^c 1 Cor. 14. 20; 1 Peter 2. 2. — ^d Mark 10. 16.

^e Or, the sinner.

14. I tell you—"I say unto you." **Justified**—He had asked and had received the divine mercy. The Pharisee, not having sought, did not find that boon. **Every one that exalteth himself**, etc.—The lesson of this parable is given in the last sentence. Our Lord himself presented in his earthly life the best commentary on these words. See Phil. 2. 6-11. With this parable ends the section of nine chapters which is found only in Luke's gospel. The rest of the narrative is in common with the other evangelists.

III. THE CHILDLIKE SPIRIT. VERSES 15-17.



A PHARISEE.

15. **Brought . . . infants**—Kept bringing. Jewish mothers were accustomed to carry their babes to rabbis for their blessing. The mention of "infants" instead of "children" makes it the more obvious why the disciples rebuked them; infants in arms could gain nothing from the instruction of Jesus. **Touch them**—And so confer a blessing. Moslem mothers in these days bring their babes to the mosques in Constantinople to the sheiks for a like purpose. The tense of the verb suggests, as it does not in Mark, that many came. **Rebuked**—The Greek indicates a series of rebukes. The disciples were more anxious to have Jesus recognized as king than as rabbi, and thought that this action of the mothers would interfere with his royal dignity.

16. **Called them**—Called the mothers, who at the rebuke of the disciples were carrying the children away without the blessing they had sought. **Suffer little children**—Not any ancient religious teacher, save Jesus, ever noticed children. There is scarcely an allusion to children in all the poetry or ethics of the

ancient world. **Of such is the kingdom**—Of such, that is, who possess, not the childish, but the childlike, traits of 1. Humility; 2. Teachableness; 3. Affection; 4. Enthusiasm, wholeheartedness; 5. Trust. Another way of saying, "My kingdom is not of this world." The American Committee of Revisers prefers the rendering, "to such belongeth." They who have the docility and meekness of children enter into the kingdom of heaven as into their own realm. Compare Matt. 18. 3; 5. 3.

17. **Receive**—Our Lord means this, that a child is peculiarly and emphatically a recipient,

Authorized Version.

not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

Revised Version.

Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

one who *receives*. It gives nothing; it earns nothing; it can claim nothing. It has to *receive* everything. There is no "give and take" between an infant and its mother. The giving is all on the mother's side; the taking all on the child's. And so must it be with us and God. Of course it is so really; but men will not see it; they want to give God something to earn his favor, to claim it as a right. Jesus says, No, you must become as a little child—be willing to receive all as of grace; let there be no "give and take;" be a recipient and nothing else. You must not come for the water of life with a cup already half full of ink. Bring an empty vessel, and he will fill it to overflowing. It is the humble *recipient* whom God *receives*. Perhaps to some readers the words will occur, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." So it is; but those words have to do, not with our relations to God, but with our relations to one another. Toward God we must be recipients; toward men, givers. First, "ask, and thou shalt *receive*"—"receive forgiveness of sin" (Acts 26. 18); "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2. 38); "receive the spirit of adoption" (Rom. 8. 15); receive such "showers of blessing" that "there shall not be room enough to *receive*" them (Mal. 3. 10). And then go and be givers to others, with the words ringing in our ears, "What hast thou that thou didst not *receive*?" "Freely ye have *received*, freely give." That will be like Christ. There is no other way to be like him. "To as many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God," like himself. **As a little child**—This sentence does not mean that children have the Christian graces; what passes for purity in childhood is the innocence of ignorance. They have not been compelled to make decision of any great moral questions involving purity and impurity. These came to this new King of Galilee, not, like his disciples, for what they could get, seeking positions of honor and influence, but with profound veneration seeking his blessing. It is possible even to seek holy eminence in a spirit that is intrinsically selfish. Jesus says that those who thus seek the kingdom of God shall never find it. **Enter therein**—Indicating that no man inherits a membership in the kingdom, but everyone must seek admission therein.

Illustration 140. "Some people talk of how humble they are. If they have true humility there will be no need to publish it. A lighthouse does not have a drum beaten or a trumpet blown in order to proclaim the proximity of a lighthouse; it is its own witness. There is a little brook not far from where I live, and after a heavy rain you can hear the rush of its waters a long way off. But let there come a few days of pleasant weather, and the brook becomes almost silent. And there is a river near my house the flow of which I never hear in my life as it pours on its deep majestic course the year round. Those who proclaim loudest are not those who have most piety."—*Moody*.

Illustration 141. "'Little children received by Christ' was seldom painted by the old masters. It is significant of our greater interest in their religious training that it is now a favorite theme. The bas-relief of Thorwaldsen, the sculptor, is sincere and tender. Photographs of it may easily be found. Sir Charles Eastlake has most lovingly represented this incident. The little ones and their mothers crowd in upon Jesus so that two of the disciples are about to shut the door against others who would come. The Saviour, seated in the midst, turns to forbid this exclusiveness. A beautiful child rests on his lap with head nestled upon his breast. Some of the children have brought flowers. One who sits at the Master's feet holds some lilies, emblems of his own innocence and of the sinlessness of Jesus. A touch of nature and of humor is the child who offers flowers to one of the frowning disciples."—*J. Weare Dearborn*.

THE MAISTER AND THE BAIRNS.

The Maister sat in a wee cot hoose Tae the Jordan's waters near,
An' the fisher fowk crushed and crooded round, The Maister's voice tae hear.
An' even the bairns frae the near-haun' street War mixin' in wi' the thrang,
Laddies and lassies wi' wee bare feet Jinkin' the crood amang.
An' ane o' the Twal, at the Maister's side, Rase up an' cried alood—
"Come, come, bairns, this is nae place for you, Rin awa' hame oot the crood."
But the Maister said as they turned awa', "Let the wee bairns come tae me!"
An' he gath'ered them roon' him whar he sat An' lifted ane up on his knee.

An' he gaithered them roon' him whar he sat An' strakit their curly hair,
 An' he said tae the won'erin' fisher fowk That croodit aroon' him there—
 "Sen' na the weans awa' frae me, But rather this lesson learn—
 That nane'll win in at heaven's yett That isna as pure as a bairn!"
 O Thou who watchest the ways o' men, Keep our feet in the heavenly airt,
 An' bring us at last tae thy home abune As pure as the bairns in he'rt.—*William Thompson.*

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

There are two detached events, yet there is a connecting link between them, for both are upon one subject—**How to seek God.**

I. We should seek God in his house. Verses 9, 10. Both worshipers went up to the temple, for in the childhood of God's Church it was necessary that God should seem to have a local habitation. Our churches are not temples, but simply meeting places for God's people. Yet even now there are peculiar blessings to be gained by attendance upon the services of Christ's church.

II. We should seek God sincerely and humbly. Verses 11-13. One of these men worshiped to be seen of men and to vaunt his own goodness. The other came in the humble, earnest spirit, pouring out his soul before God, unconscious of spectators. His was true prayer.

III. We should come confessing our sin. Verse 13. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1. 8). There is sin enough in the heart of man to doom him to perdition. Let us come to God in the heart-searching, sin-confessing, repentant spirit.

IV. We should come seeking mercy. Verses 13, 14. Both men found what they sought: one, honor from men; the other, mercy and forgiveness from God. "Mercy" is the cry of the guilty, as "Justice" is that of the innocent. Compare the two parables on prayer in this chapter.

V. We should come with others to God. Verse 15. As these parents brought their children—perhaps they were teachers bringing their pupils—so should we bring to God those whom we love the most. We may bring them by our prayers, our counsels, our influence, and most of all by our example. Indeed, we cannot help exerting some influence either attracting to Christ or driving from him.

VI. We should come, and bring others, overcoming obstacles. Verse 15. The publican found obstacles in going to God's house, in the contempt and coldness of other worshipers. Nobody shook hands with him and invited him in, yet he went. These parents were repulsed when they brought their children to Jesus, yet they brought them. Satan will put plenty of barriers in our way if he finds that we are hindered by them.

VII. We should come in the spirit of a child to God. Not in the child*ish*, but in the child*like*, spirit; that of the open heart, the receptive, tender, teachable will, with ready faith to receive what the Lord has waiting for us. Those who come to God in such a spirit will receive pardon for themselves and blessings to those whom they bring.

PRAYER.

TRUE.	FALSE.
SORROW FOR IN	SELF- SATISFACTION
REWARDED BY	
EXALTATION.	ABASEMENT.
WHAT IS MY PRAYER?	

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

On publicans, *Geikie*, i, 265, 273; ii, 27, 32; *Stapfer*, 215, 216. On fasting, *Geikie*, i, 347; ii, 34-37; *Edersheim*, i, 662, 663; ii, 291. On fasting and almsgiving, *Stapfer*, 152

379-385; *Tuck*, 373, 374. On tithes, *Geikie*, i, 83, 237, 238; ii, 60; *Edersheim*, ii, 212, 412, 413; *Stapfer*, 213-217, 383, 384. Verse 9, *F. W. Robertson*, "The Pharisee and the Publican." Verses 9-14, *D. L. Moody*, "Pride and Penitence." Verse 13, *Spurgeon*, "Confession and Absolution." Verses 13, 14, *G. Whitefield*, Pharisee and Publican." Verse 14, *F. D. Maurice*, "The Publican."



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS VI AND VII.

1. The rich young ruler (Matt. 19. 16-30; Mark 10. 17-31; Luke 18. 18-30). 2. Christ foretells his crucifixion (Matt. 20. 17-19; Mark 10. 32-34; Luke 18. 31-34). 3. The ambition of James and John (Matt. 20. 20-28; Mark 10. 35-45). 4. The blind men near Jericho (Matt. 20. 29-34; Mark 10. 46-52; Luke 18. 35-43). 5. The visit to Zaccheus (Luke 19. 1-10).



LESSON VII.—MAY 17.

PARABLE OF THE POUNDS.—LUKE 19. 11-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.—Luke 16. 10.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

ENVIRONMENTS.—Jesus is journeying toward the final act of his life at Jerusalem. He is passing out of the city of Jericho, where he has given sight to Bartimeus and reclined as a guest at the table of Zaccheus. He, alone of all that company, knows how soon the hosannas will be turned into curses. Within ten days will come the agony of Gethsemane, the crown of thorns, and a death of shame. Centuries must pass before his kingdom, with its weapons, not carnal, but spiritual, shall conquer the hearts of the world. He had permitted Bartimeus to address him as Messiah without challenge or reproof (Luke 18. 38), and had defended his association with the publican class as being the proper spiritual duty of a Messiah who would seek and save the lost. Yet, even so, he was understood by neither friends nor foes, since both alike surmised that he was on his way to Jerusalem to begin a political revolution (verse 11). Once more he deemed it necessary, therefore, to emphasize the spirituality of his mission by the use of parabolic language, in which he postpones the establishment of his kingdom until after his own death and resurrection (verse 12), which events he had so recently foretold (Luke 18. 31-34); admonishes his disciples to be faithful to duty in his absence (verses 13, 15-26), and warns those who reject him of the consequences (verses 14, 27).

THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS AND THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.—

Notice the difference between the Parable of the Pounds and that of the Talents (Matt. 25. 14-30): 1. In time of delivery; 2. In characters; 3. In endowments; 4. In rewards; 5. In aims. "In the parable of the talents the gifts differ in value 'according to the several ability' of the servants; but equal faithfulness produces relatively equal results, the five talents making five more, and the two making two. In the parable of the pounds the gifts are the same, but the zeal and ability displayed in their use vary, and the results differ accordingly. The former illustrates (as one commentator well expresses it) 'equal fidelity with different degrees of advantage;' the latter, 'different degrees of improvement of the same opportunities.' In fact, the 'pounds,' in order of thought, comes before the 'talents.' By the employment of the 'pounds' the 'several ability' of the servants is tested and determined; and then follow the larger and varying gifts of 'talents.' Thus the reward in the 'pounds' is—'Have thou authority over ten cities;'—'Be thou also over five cities;' just like the giving of the talents, 'to one

five, to another two.' And when we observe that the 'talent' was sixty times larger than the 'pound,' we see the reasonableness of taking the parable of the pounds as in this sense introductory to that of the talents, although in other respects they run parallel—in their teaching, for instance, about the slothful servant, and about the account to be given to the returning master."—*E. Stock.*

LESSON HYMN.—

Be it my only wisdom here, To serve the Lord with filial fear, With loving gratitude :
Superior sense may I display, By shunning every evil way, And walking in the good.
O may I still from sin depart ; A wise and understanding heart, Jesus, to me be given :
And let me through thy Spirit know To glorify my God below, And find my way to heaven.

—*Charles Wesley.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (May 11), Parable of the Pounds, Luke 19. 11-27. *Tuesday*, The talents, Matt. 25. 14-30. *Wednesday*, Integrity rewarded, Gen. 41. 37-45. *Thursday*, Serving God, Mal. 3. 18-18. *Friday*, Spiritual gifts, 1 Cor. 12. 1-11. *Saturday*, Right use of gifts, Rom. 12. 1-9. *Sunday*, The day of the Lord, 2 Peter 3. 1-14.

Authorized Version.

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Je-ru'sa-lem, and because ¹they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 ²He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants, and de-

Revised Version.

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Je-ru'sa-lem, and *because* they supposed that the kingdom of God was imme-

12 diately to appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to 13 return. And he called ten ¹servants of

¹ Acts 1. 6.—² Matt. 25. 14; Mark 13. 34.

¹ Gr. *bond servants.*

I. THE KING. VERSES 11-15.

11. They—The eager throng of followers. **These things**—Especially what is recorded in verses 9 and 10 as to Messianic duty toward the chief publican as a child of Abraham. **Parable**—This form of speech was adapted to the mixed character of the company addressed. **Because**—As we have seen in the BACKGROUND, Jesus told this parable to correct those followers who believed he would somehow carve his way to the throne when he reached Jerusalem. **Nigh**—About nineteen miles distant, by a steep road up the mountain. **The kingdom of God**—By this term the people generally understood the restoration of the temporal sovereignty of the Jewish people, which they expected would be accompanied by such divine interferences as had signalized the passage of the nation from Egypt to Canaan. The present journey of Jesus to the passover was thought by many to indicate plainly an intention on his part to seize the reins of government. The only conception of a kingdom which the Jews of that day could frame was such a one as Alexander had captured or Cæsar organized. Such a clear apprehension of spiritual truths as the modern Church enjoys was unknown before the divine revelation which Jesus brought.

12. He said therefore—To check these mistaken temporal expectations. **A certain nobleman**—"A certain man well born." A fitting type of Him who was both the son of David and the Son of God. **A far country**—Representing heaven, we will suppose. **To receive for himself a kingdom**—The story corresponds with contemporary history. Many kings of tributary provinces had gone to Rome to obtain the sanction of the emperor and senate to their claims. Nearly all the Herods had visited Rome for this purpose. Jesus may be said to have begun to receive his kingdom when from heaven he sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2. 33).

13. His ten servants—Rather, "ten of his slaves." We are ever to keep in mind that we belong to our Master. There is no significance in the number ten, except, that it may

Authorized Version.

livered them ten ^a pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 ^a But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the ^b money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

Revised Version.

his, and gave them ten ^a pounds, and said unto them, Trade ye *herewith* till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent an embassy after him, saying, We will not

15 that this man reign over us. And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these ^a servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading. And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath made ten

^a Gr. *mina*.—^b John 1. 11.—^c Gr. *silver*, and so ver. 23.

^a *Mina*, here translated a pound, is equal to one hundred drachmas. See chap. 15. 8.—^b Gr. *bond servants*.

represent the fewness of our Lord's professed followers at this time. **Ten pounds**—"Ten minas." The mina was a Greek and Roman coin worth about seventeen dollars. The pound represents every man's endowment of opportunity in the service of Christ. This is in one sense equal with all men, for it is proportioned to each one's ability. **Occupy**—"Trade with this." A peddler used to be called an "occupier." **Till I come**—Their faithfulness was to be that of servants who momentarily expect their master's return (Luke 12. 35-40).

14. His citizens—Here representing his Jewish opposers. **Hated him**—Archelaus, whose career probably came to the minds of the people as they listened to the Master's story, had been guilty of an extraordinary cruelty, which aroused general hatred. But Jesus could truthfully have said of the ruling classes of his day, "They hated me without a cause." **Sent a message**—Literally, "an embassy." Just so the Jews sent a counter petition against Archelaus, asking to be released from his rule and annexed directly to the empire. **We will not**—"We are determined not." Already the shadow of his rejection by his own at Pilate's bar was creeping over the Saviour's soul. **Reign over us**—And yet if Jesus had only promised to establish a secular kingdom the people would gladly have made him king.

15. When he was returned—The parable may be now supposed to sweep across all human history, from the ascension of Christ until his return. **To be called unto him**—"For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5. 10). Every follower of Christ will be called upon to render an account of all his endowments, opportunities, and possessions. **How much every man had gained**—What use each had made of his spiritual opportunities. The Greek word suggests the phrase "carried on the business."

Illustration 142. Repeat Daniel Webster's remark, "The sublimest thought of my life has been my personal responsibility to God."

Illustration 143. Opportunity is like the manna spread on the ground before the host of Israel, which had to be appropriated and prepared in order to become of any benefit.

II. THE WORKERS. VERSES 16-19.

16. Thy pound hath gained ten pounds—Notice that, while the lord speaks of what the servants had gained, the faithful servant says, "Thy pound hath gained." He meekly leaves himself out of account. It is God's grace working in us that accomplishes good among men. So Paul speaks of the grace of God (1 Cor. 15. 10).

MEN ARE NOT ESTIMATED BY GOD ACCORDING TO THEIR TALENTS, but according to what they do with those talents. The sweetest singer in God's ears is not the one who has the sweetest voice and knows best how to use it, but the one who has done the best he can with the voice that he has. The best speaker before God is not the one who is most eloquent and popular, but the one who has made the greatest effort. The largest giver is not the one who gives the most money, but the one who has made the largest sacrifice.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been ⁴ faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.	17 pounds more. And he said unto him, Well done, thou good ⁴ servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have
18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.	18 thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Thy pound, Lord,
19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.	19 hath made five pounds. And he said unto him also, Be thou also over five cities.
⁴ Matt. 25. 21; chap. 16. 10.	⁴ Gr. bond servant.

17. Good servant—The goodness spoken of is simply the having done what a servant ought to do. Paul was fond of calling himself the servant of Christ. **Ten cities**—The figure harmonizes with the political tone of the parable. It illustrates a law of the spiritual kingdom, that faithfulness enlarges opportunities for usefulness. Paul, by doing his duty at Damascus, Tarsus, and Antioch, was unconsciously preparing himself to be an apostle to the whole Roman empire. As greatly as a city surpasses seventeen dollars, so shall our reward rise above our endeavor.

THE VERY GIST OF CHRISTIANITY IS FIDELITY—FAITHFULNESS. Our frequent technical use of the word faith in religious meetings tempts us to forget that there can be no faith without faithfulness.

Illustration 141. "Faithful in a very little." Tell of the artist who made a window out of bits of glass picked up from the refuse of the factory—a window of the rarest beauty, which rivaled the work of the great artists who had at command all the glass they needed; and of the weaver who had no wool and silk for his tapestry, but used ordinary thread and twine so skillfully as to make a curtain coveted by the king. Use the little bits of time and service and talent for Him, and the result will surely please the King.

Illustration 145. There had been a flower show in London, and there was one beautiful geranium which took the prize. It belonged to a poor little girl who lived in the slums. The judge could hardly believe that the plant belonged to her. She said the flower had been given her when very small, and they told her it could not live unless it had plenty of sunshine. The sun did not shine much in the court where she lived, but she got up early and put her flower in the sun, and as the sun went round she moved her plant and so kept it in the sunshine. And she won the prize. Our gift may be very small, but if we keep it near the Sun of righteousness it is sure to grow. Ask Christ to bless your talent, and you may gain a prize which others with greater talent may miss.

Illustration 146. Many years ago, in August, an invalid lady visited a large city. She was appalled at the large number of sick children and mothers dying for want of fresh air. "I cannot save all," she said; "but I may save one. There is room in my home for one mother and child." This interested a woman who could not do as much as even that, but she said, "I can at least tell others of it." So she wrote an account of it for a New York paper. A third woman read the story and sent a thousand dollars to the editor, with a request that he would open a fund for this noble purpose. The Fresh Air charity, which has saved thousands of lives and has now taken root in all parts of America and in England, is the result. If the woman who thought of it on that torrid day, as she passed sick and weary through the slums, had decided, "I cannot save all, why should I trouble myself with one?" how many lives that might have been saved would have been lost!

Illustration 147. "The minister of a church requested two carpenters in his village to make him some shelves for a cupboard in his house, giving precisely the same commission to both, and without telling either that he had given it to the other. Let us call the two mechanics Jones and Smith. Jones at once came and took the necessary measurements, went away and set to work, and next day sent in the shelves, which fitted into their place exactly, and gave the minister entire satisfaction. Smith, feeling that the job was too paltry to demand particular attention or trouble, appeared at the house to take his measurements the day after Jones had finished his work, and executed the order about three weeks afterward; and then his shelves did not fit, and were returned. A few days after that Smith, to his intense vexation, heard that Jones had been appointed to finish the church throughout with new pews. The small commission, we see, was given first as a test. 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.'"—E. Stock.

18, 19. Five pounds . . . five cities—The omission of the "well done" and "good servant" indicates that this person had not done as much with his knowledge of the truth as he might have done. As there are degrees of zeal on earth, so there will be degrees of reward in heaven.

Authorized Version.

20 And another came, saying, 'Lord, behold, *here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:*

21 'For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, 'Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou wicked servant.* 'Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my

Revised Version.

20 And 'another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is thy pound, which I kept laid up in*

21 a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. He saith unto him,

22 Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou wicked 'servant.* Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow;

23 then wherefore gavest thou not my money

¹ Prov. 23. 13, 16; Matt. 25. 24; ver. 13; chap. 3. 9; 6. 46; James 4. 17.—² Matt. 25. 24; Rom. 8. 15.—³ Sam. 1. 16; Job 15. 6; Matt. 12. 37.—⁴ Matt. 25. 26.

⁵ Gr. the other.—⁶ Gr. bond servant.

III. THE IDLER. .VERSES 20-27.

20. Lord, behold—This servant represents professed followers of Christ who make no use of their talents, gain, and influence. Thy pound—He had found no such capacity for increase in it as the others had. He had no enthusiasm over the deposit. I have kept laid up—The unfaithful servant is the only one to tell what *he* has done; the others modestly mention what their lord's money has gained. This is not a world for hiding or hoarding either capital or truth. Napkin—A kind of kerchief.

Illustration 148.

The crop of wheat stored in the cellar decays: that spread out on the ground returns a hundredfold. A man once hid a store of bank notes in the earth for safety, but afterward found them decayed.



MODERN ORIENTAL MONEY CHANGERS.

21. I feared thee—A rebellious fear, as of one looking up to a hated authority. Austere—That is, "hard." As the defining clauses which follow show, he means that the master, like the Egyptian taskmasters, would not be satisfied with any reasonable success he might achieve. The servant misunderstood the character of his master, and falsely deemed him unjust, forgetting that pound and servant alike were his. Takest up that thou layedst not down—"Demandest a service to which thou hast no right."

22, 23. Out of thine own mouth—"By thine own principles of judgment." Thou knewest—To be read interrogatively. Did you know that, indeed? Wherefore then gavest thou not—Since he thought he knew so well the character and rigorous judgment of his lord, why did he

Authorized Version.

money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with ⁹ usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, ¹⁰ That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Revised Version.

into the bank, and ¹ I at my coming should

24 have required it with interest? And he said unto them that stood by, Take away from him the pound, and give it unto him

25 that hath the ten pounds. And they said

26 unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds. I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be

⁹ Exod. 22, 25, 27; Deut. 23, 19, 20.—¹⁰ Matt. 13, 12; 25, 29; Mark 4, 25; chap. 8, 18.

¹ Or, *I should have gone and required.*

not prepare to meet it? **The bank**—The table of the money changer, by whose means the money might be invested and increased. "If you could not yourself make proclamation of the truth, why did you not commit it to some one who could?" When the work of the Lord at Antioch seemed too great for Barnabas he had the thoughtfulness to make a journey to Tarsus to find a man who would be equal to it (Acts 11. 25). **Usury**—The produce of the investment.

Illustration 149. "How will you meet the King when he returns? All must render up an account to him. An account of what? Of everything; if you intrust a friend with ten dollars will you be satisfied if he accounts for nine dollars and ninety-nine cents? Will you deserve a reward? Paul knew he did not (1 Cor. 15, 10; 1 Tim. 1, 15; compare Luke 17, 10); and yet he expected one (2 Tim. 4, 8)—why? Because Christ is a generous master, and gives more than we deserve!"—*Stock.*

Illustration 150. "What are you doing with your 'pounds,' your 'talents'?" Do you think, as the man with the one talent doubtless thought, 'I can do nothing, I have so little?' Think of the Jewish maid (2 Kings 5), the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17), the widow of Jerusalem (Mark 12), the lad with the loaves (John 6). Do you say, like the slothful servant in both parables, 'God is so strict and hard—I never can please him—it's no use trying' (see Job 21, 15; Mal. 1, 13), and so do nothing? What a mistake! He is so generous!"—*Stock.*

Illustration 151. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (Paul's question, 1 Cor. 4, 7.) Robert and George dropped pennies into the missionary box. Robert received his penny from his mother on purpose to put it in; George earned his; which of them gave *his own*? Neither did! Who gave Robert his kind mother? and who gave George his health, strength, skill, time, opportunity to earn wages? As King David said (1 Chron. 29, 14), "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." Nay, even we ourselves, bodies, souls, spirits, belong to God: "not our own;" his by creation (Psalm 100, 3) and by redemption (1 Cor. 6, 19, 20).

24, 25. Them that stood by—The guard. **Take from him**—Mental endowment, time, spiritual power—none of them bring any gain unless utilized, and all are lost by neglect. **Give to him**—It is God's law that he who makes the most of privileges receives more. Strength grows by exercise, knowledge by study, usefulness by activity.

26. Unto every one which hath shall be given—The whole drift of the parable shows that this means, "To every one who makes use of what he has."

"THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS OF GOD ARE ABSOLUTELY FREE AND UNDESERVED; but they are not bestowed indiscriminately. God seeks first of all those who have the capacity for receiving and containing—'He filleth the hungry with good things.' The publican in the parable (Luke 18, 10-14) had this capacity. The Pharisee had it not. And so, while the publican obtained mercy, the Pharisee obtained nothing. When our Lord sat in the house in Capernaum, surrounded by Pharisees and doctors of the law, 'which were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem' (Luke 5, 17), so that the very entrance was choked up, he had rich gifts to bestow. 'The power of the Lord was present to heal;' but who were benefited by it? The man carried thither as a helpless cripple and walking away erect and vigorous, and the four friends who had brought him, and who went away with the satisfaction of seeing the sick man restored and their errand successful. 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' To the faithful servant more is given in trust. To him

Authorized Version.

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

Revised Version.

27 taken away from him. Howbeit these mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

who has climbed the first steep ascent the way is open to mount higher. Elisha received the 'double portion' he had asked for, because he had so used his advantages as to have attained the spiritual capacity to witness the glorious departure of his Master (2 Kings 2. 2-12). And to the man with restored eyesight, who had boldly confessed his Healer before the Pharisees, Christ further revealed himself as the Son of God (John 9. 35-38). He who not only has tasted the grace of God, but is ever living upon it and is ever hungry for more, may claim the promise that he shall be filled."—*Stock*.

Illustration 152. Here is a scholarship to be conferred. Many a student is anxious to win it, not merely for the honor, but for the substantial advantages it confers. To whom shall it be awarded? The person who knows least might seem in most need of the means for continuing his education. But it is not given to him. The candidates have to pass an examination, and the one chosen is he who proves himself to have made the best use of the advantages he has already enjoyed, that being a reasonable pledge that he will make the most of what is yet to be conferred. The scholarship is not a dole to the needy, but a gift to him who will know how to use it.

Illustration 153. "Here is a person possessed of something; and this something already possessed is a pledge to him that he shall have more. Let us see why. I have a little green vase standing on a wall bracket, into which I never put a flower, although all the other vases may be full. What is the reason? Put them all together and pour a little water into each. In a short time the green vase will be empty again. It has no capacity for retaining. It would be useless to put flowers in there, for they would quickly wither. But the other vases, which have water in them, receive the flowers. 'To him that hath' capacity for receiving and containing it shall be given."—*Stock*.

Illustration 154. Tell the story of a noble who was imprisoned for entering into a conspiracy with a prince to obtain a throne; afterward, when the prince became king, his chains were weighed, and as much gold by weight was bestowed upon him.

Illustration 155. William E. Dodge, of New York, whose contributions to missions amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars, was a poor boy when in school in Cornwall. In the same school was a boy from the Sandwich Islands, to be educated as a missionary to his own people. Young Dodge proposed to two of his classmates that they should take their pocket money, buy potatoes, plant them, and in the fall give the proceeds to the Sandwich Islander for his missions. In later years Mr. Dodge said, "From that time it seemed as if everything I touched prospered."

27. Mine enemies—The official class who from the outset plotted to killed Jesus. **Slay them**—"Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8. 24).

TEACHINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST—1. It is real, though the King be not visible; 2. The day will dawn when it will be recognized before the universe; 3. It is a kingdom of work, and not of ease; 4. It has its enemies; 5. It will have its day of account, which friends and foes alike must face; 6. Its rewards are proportioned to the use of opportunities.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS—1. What Christ expects of his followers; 2. What Christ promises his followers; 3. What Christ's enemies may expect.

THERE IS A FINAL ACCOUNT which each of us must make: 1. It is an account with the King; 2. It is personal; 3. It is universal; 4. It is an account of privileges which we have enjoyed; 5. Faithfulness will be rewarded; 6. Neglect will bring penalty.

THE TRUE TEST OF WORTH.

1. **IN THIS LIFE IT IS TALENT THAT TELLS.** How many "pounds" have been invested in you? You cannot enter "society" without inquiries being made concerning your "family;" and your social standing will be determined at the outset largely by your inherited social prestige. So in the business world, chances of success are greatly enhanced when one starts life with a rich financial endowment. In the world of letters and art he who lacks intellect and education has little chance of eminence. There is no field of art in which success is not largely secured by talents, and according to your dowry of talents you are graded.

2. IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE NOT TALENT, BUT THE USE OF TALENT, DETERMINES ONE'S STANDING. There are "some natural laws" that do not hold over in the "spiritual world." God does not estimate his creatures according to the talents with which he has endowed them, but according to what they do with those talents.

3. CHRISTIANS SHOULD FORM THEIR JUDGMENTS UPON CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES. When we leave the standpoint of a selfish world and pass over to the divine point of view we recognize the best performers in those who make the most faithful endeavor. The widow's mite is the richest gift to the heavenly treasure. The trembling, hesitant word of the young convert in praise of his new-found Lord is the most eloquent sermon preached for the Master.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

I. **The Parable.** State the circumstances under which the parable was spoken. Verse 11. Jesus wished to show his hearers that the kingdom of God was not a kingdom of offices to be filled, and of rewards to be enjoyed at once, but a kingdom of earnest and prolonged endeavor, requiring submission to the King and labor in his cause.

II. **The Nobleman.** This is none other than Christ himself, the Son of the King of kings, and heir by birth to a throne. He is gone to a country which is far from our sight, but he will one day come to his own again, crowned with honor and glory.

III. **The Servants.** The servants of the king are those who recognize his authority, and are to be carefully distinguished from the rebellious citizens. Such are the professed followers of Christ now. We notice that they are in two classes—"profitable" and "unprofitable." What is the difference between them? To which class do you belong?

IV. **The Citizens.** These are those who are in rebellion against their lawful king. They represent now all who are openly or in heart opposed to Christ. Notice their fate. "Bring hither, and slay them before me." There is a vast gulf between the most unprofitable of servants, even though saved as by fire, and the enemy who is destroyed.

V. **The Pounds.** These represent opportunity or endowment; what man may be in Christ or may do for Christ. Notice the difference between "pounds" here and "talents" in another parable. The aim of this parable is to show that God's servants are rewarded, not according to the measure of their endowments, but the measure of their endeavor.

VI. **The Rewards.** Each servant receives the reward proportioned to his labor; but the measure of reward is great beyond all human thought. Who would not buy a whole city for a pound? Yet that is the scale on which God pays his people for all they do and suffer here. "His thoughts are not our thoughts."

FAITHFULNESS.	
ILLUSTRATION.	APPLICATION.
MATERIAL.	
TO EACH A POUND.	TO EACH A POWER.
COMMAND.	
USE TILL I COME.	
RESULTS.	
ONE GAINED 10	WHAT HAVE I
ONE GAINED 5	GAINED?
ONE GAINED 0	
REWARDS.	
ONE RECEIVED 10 CITIES.	COMMENDATION ?
ONE RECEIVED 5 CITIES.	CONDEMNATION
ONE RECEIVED NOTHING.	
"HE THAT IS FAITHFUL IN THAT WHICH IS LEAST IS FAITHFUL ALSO IN MUCH."	

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS VII AND VIII.

1. Anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany (Matt. 26. 6-13; Mark 14. 3-9; John 11. 55-12. 11). This was near the end of March, A. D. 30. 2. The triumphal entry, Sunday, April 2 (Matt. 21. 1-11; Mark 11. 1-11; Luke 19. 29-44; John 12. 12-19). 3. The cursing

of the fig tree (Matt. 21. 18-22; Mark 11. 12-14). 4. Second cleansing of the temple (Matt. 21. 12-17; Mark 11. 15-19; Luke 19. 45-48; 21. 37, 38). Both of these are dated Monday, April 3. 5. The fig tree withered away (Matt. 21. 20-22; Mark 11. 20-25). 6. Christ's authority challenged (Matt. 21. 23-27; Mark 11. 27-33; Luke 20. 1-8). The two last items are dated Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30, the day on which the words of LESSON VIII were spoken.

LESSON VIII.—MAY 24.

JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE.—LUKE 20. 9-19.

[Read the connection, Luke 19. 47 to Luke 21. 4.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.—Luke 20. 17.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

WHEN THIS PARABLE WAS SPOKEN.—This parable is a portion of the last discourse of our Lord. The day on which it was uttered was the most eventful in his whole life. On Monday he had made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and cast the traders out of the temple. That night he lodged in Bethany. It must have been evident almost as soon as he reached the temple on Tuesday morning that systematic plans had been formed to silence him. Opposing politicians and ecclesiastics had for the time buried their differences and united against him; they pretended to be his followers, and endeavored to entrap him into statements that would embroil him with the Roman government and arouse popular prejudice. He never uttered more severe and awful truths in more scathing words than on that day; and before the crowds who listened to him had retired to rest that night he was already covertly condemned to die. The history of this day is given in Matthew, from 21. 23 to the end of chap. 23; in Mark, from 11. 27 to the end of chap. 12; and in Luke 20. It was Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30.

NOTICE THREE THINGS: 1. The wickedness of the husbandmen. They chose to do wrong, and their sin was of the most aggravated type. Sinners to-day are personally responsible, as were these men. We may talk of "environment and heredity" as we please, but every sane man has the power to choose to do right, and every unsaved sinner has chosen the wrong. 2. The voluntary sacrifice of the Son. The surroundings of this parable make necessary allusions to the human limitations of the "lord of the vineyard." But there are no such limitations with God. He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to die for mankind. 3. The long-suffering of the Lord. For a time it seems as if his patience were exhaustless; but remember, he shall come and destroy these husbandmen.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 21. 33-46; Mark 12. 1-12.

LESSON HYMN.—

Lord Jesus, when we stand afar And gaze upon thy holy cross,
In love of thee and scorn of self, O may we count the world as loss.
When we behold thy bleeding wounds, And the rough way that thou hast trod,
Make us to hate the load of sin That lay so heavy on our God.
Give us an ever-living faith To gaze upon the things we see;
And in the mystery of thy death Draw us and all men after thee!—*William W. How.*

HOME READINGS.—Monday (May 18), Jesus Teaching in the Temple, Luke 20. 9-19. Tuesday, An unprofitable vineyard, Isa. 5. 1-7. Wednesday, Despising warning, 2 Chron. 36. 11-21. Thursday, God's message unheeded, Jer. 25. 1-11. Friday, The servant rejected, Jer. 26. 8-15. Saturday, The Son rejected, John 11. 47-57. Sunday, Day of Pentecost, Acts 2. 1-21.

Authorized Version.

9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; ¹ A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

Revised Version.

9 And he began to speak unto the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went

¹ Matt. 21. 33; Mark 12. 1.

I. THE HUSBANDMEN. VERSES 9-12.

9. Began he to speak—The word “began” is prefixed to show that something which preceded led him thus to speak. It was the awkward withdrawal of the challenge of verse 2 which Luke wishes us to think of as the occasion of his speaking. **To the people**—For the



A VINEYARD IN PALESTINE.

moment the hostile priests and scribes were silenced, and our Lord turns to the listening crowd about him. They needed to be warned of the errors into which their religious leaders were endeavoring to lead them. “This whole last week of the public life of Jesus may be called a continuous cleansing of the temple. What he first did with a scourge of small cords he now does with holy eloquence—‘the sword of his mouth.’”—*Lange*. **This parable**—Probably no great thought is fully understood by all who hear it. The Jewish rabbis assumed that they were themselves the select souls who could understand divine truth, and shut out the common people from their teachings. But truth and beauty lie on the surface of the parables of Jesus, while those who are familiar with the language of the kingdom of God may understand the divine truth in its profundity. **A certain man**—We may easily imagine how they craned their necks and fixed their eyes as they listened to this story. Let us as teachers learn from the method as well as the words of the divine Teacher. **A vineyard**—Judea was a land of vineyards. The grapevine was the emblem of Palestine, as the rose is of England and the thistle of Scotland. The figure of a vineyard had often been used by religious teachers (Isa. 5. 1-7; Psalm 80; Ezek. 15. 1-6; Jer. 2. 21). **Husbandmen**—The rulers of the

MAY 24, 1896. JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE. LUKE 20. 9-19.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.	10 into another country for a long time. And at the season he sent unto the husbandmen a ¹ servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.
11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.	11 empty. And he sent yet another ¹ servant: and him also they beat, and handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty.
12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.	12 And he sent yet a third: and him also they
	¹ Gr. bond servant.

Jews should have understood that they themselves were the men to whom God had intrusted this holy responsibility. Teachers should remember that they are God's husbandmen, and that the hearts of their scholars are the vineyards they are to cultivate, and whose fruit by and by they are to return to Him who has employed them. **Went into a far country**—This detail need mean no more than that the spiritual care of the nation was intrusted to the religious orders. But it suggests that Providence sometimes seems remote when needed.

10. At the season—In the history of the Jewish nation inspired prophets had appeared who had warned kings and people of the necessity of bringing forth spiritual fruit. In each time of national emergency some such messenger from God had not failed to appear. **A servant**—The servants stand for the judges, holier priests, and prophets of God. "My servants the prophets" (Zech. 1. 6). **Give him of the fruit**—The prophet, John the Baptist, has said (Luke 3. 8), "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." **Husbandmen**—Their relation to the vineyard is emphasized by the repetition of their title. They were not owners repelling an intruder; they were simply the tenants. **Beat him, and sent him away**—The history of the prophets is the best comment on this. Some were slain. They "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, . . . bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy."

Illustration 156. Strange as it may seem, it is probable that these husbandmen justified their own course. Conscience is often warped by self-interest. "In England many people, otherwise pious, used to think it no sin to cheat the revenue; and kegs of liquor, French gloves, silk stockings, and other valuable contrabands were openly offered for sale throughout the southern and western counties, in town and country. Now, if it was allowable thus to defraud the revenue there could be no very intelligible distinction made between this sort of venial offense and the other offense of plundering a wrecked vessel; and so, step by step, by an insidious process of reason, men at length were persuaded to justify the enormous wickedness of wrecking."—*Isaac Taylor.*

Illustration 157. Wrong to an ambassador is wrong to his king. When the Roman ambassador addressed the people of Tarentum they ridiculed his imperfect Greek and threw mud on his robe. Holding up the garment, he said, "It will take much blood to wash away that stain." As a result their city was besieged and taken captive, many were slain, and the people of Tarentum became the subjects of Rome.

11. Sent another—A sign both of forbearance and of protest against the first atrocity. See Rom. 2. 4. **They beat him also**—They mistook or disregarded the motive of the owner. **Shamefully**—Added insult to injury. **Empty**—They still denied the authority of the owner.

12. Wounded—In Matthew and Mark one or more servants are at least killed outright. The tradition which Luke follows seems to have reserved the killing to the son for the sake of a stronger climax. Jesus spoke still more plainly on this topic in the same place. See Matt. 23. 29-36. **Cast him out**—Half dead from his wounds. The officers who had just attempted to thrust Jesus out of his Father's house would not lose this detail.

Illustration 158. Dr. Abbott illustrates this by reference to the scenes of violence in New York in the days of the antirent controversy. It has been vividly illustrated in more recent years in the land agitations in Ireland. For biblical illustrations see 1 Kings 18. 13; 19. 14; 22. 24-27; 2 Kings 6. 31; 21. 16; 2 Chron. 24. 19-24; 36. 15, 16; Jer. 20. 1, 2; 37. 15; Acts. 7. 51-55; 1 Thess. 2. 15

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, ^a What shall I do? ^b I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence <i>him</i> when they see him.	13 wounded, and cast him forth. And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they
14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.	14 will reverence him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned one with another, saying, This is the heir: let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.
^a Isa. 5, 4; Hosea 6, 4; 11, 8.— ^b Matt. 3, 17; 17, 8; chap. 9, 36; John 1, 34; Rom. 8, 3; Gal. 4, 4; 1 John 4, 9, 15.	

II. THE SON. VERSES 13-14.

13. The lord of the vineyard—The title calls attention to the rights which have been so flagrantly and persistently violated. **What shall I do**—The perversity of the men is represented as perplexing the mind of God. **I will send my beloved son**—"Who took on him the form of a servant." Jesus had so often spoken of his unique relations to the Father, as John's gospel especially shows us, that the rulers would note this silent claim to an authority far greater than any they could claim (Heb. 1, 5). **It may be**—As we might say, "perhaps." "This 'perhaps' belongs, of course, only to the parable, but it (1) indicates their free will, and (2) enhances their awful crime to represent it as having seemed all but inconceivable."—*Farrar*. **Reverence him**—He represented more completely the authority and rights of the owner. It was the unbelief of his contemporaries which most astonished and grieved Jesus. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (1, 1-3) in like manner contrasted the dignity of God's own Son as an instrument of reclamation with that of his prophets. So far from reverencing the Son these Jewish husbandmen had demanded of Jesus what right he had to teach in the temple at all (verse 2).

14. Reasoned—Not without irony is this word used. What kind of reasoning was this? Jesus had had occasion before this to protest against the blindness and foolishness of such reasoning (Mark 2, 8). **This is the heir**—They unhesitatingly recognize both him and his legal claim. The Jewish officers cannot be credited with total ignorance as to the divine mission and dignity of Jesus. **Let us kill him**—These words must have had a startling sound to men who had already more than once taken counsel together how they might destroy him. In the first epistle which Paul wrote he took a retrospective glance at the bloody record of his people, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us" (1 Thess. 2, 15). **That the inheritance may be ours**—How astonishingly pointed is this figure! The priests and scribes killed Jesus, that they might hold back from him the nation, which they regarded as their own property.

Illustration 159. From the first public appearance of Jesus at Jerusalem he was met by determined opposition (John 2, 18, etc.). The ruler who wanted to hear more from him dared not come to him by day (John 3, 1). All through his ministry his movements were dogged by foes. See Luke 5, 17, 21; 6, 2, 7; Matt. 12, 14, 24; 15, 1, 2; 16, 1; 19, 8; John 5, 10, 15, 16; 7, 1, 32; 8, 13, 59; Luke 11, 53, 54; 14, 2; 15, 1; 16, 14; 17, 20; John 10, 39; 11, 53, etc.

Illustration 160. The conduct of these husbandmen may seem inexplicable to some of our scholars. An intelligent boy might well ask, Where were the police during all this time? how could the husbandmen believe that the beaten and shamefully treated and wounded servant would not, on his return, make such representation as would insure their speedy punishment? by what sort of logic could they reason that the killing of the son would secure them the vineyard? But however the parable jars on our Western sensibilities it is truly oriental. The government of Palestine then and the government of all the Orient to-day is fitful and uneven. Juries and constables are unknown. Judges are open to bribes. A place geographically remote is remote from the law as well. And there was no moral sense in the community sufficiently dictatorial to suppress these husbandmen. The struggle was simply a test of strength between the lord of the vineyard and them. He might, they thought, be so overcome by the death of his son as to give up the contest. As an illustration of the strange conceptions of justice prevalent in the East take the story of *Dr. Joseph Wolff*, who was

MAY 24, 1896. JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE. LUKE 20. 9-19.

Authorized Version.

15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, ⁴The stone which

Revised Version.

15 And they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore will

16 the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. And when they heard it, they said, ²God

17 forbid. But he looked upon them, and said, What then is this that is written,

⁴ Psalm 118, 22; Matt. 21, 42.

² Gr. *Be it not so.*

stripped of his money and narrowly escaped death at the hands of robbers in Persia. The robbers were captured, and, together with Dr. Wolff, were brought before one of the chief khans. The khan said, "I have got one good quality, I love strict justice; therefore tell me the truth, and you shall see my justice. How much have these rascals taken from you?" Dr. Wolff said, "They have taken from me eighty tomauns." "Eighty tomauns!" exclaimed the khan. "Yes," said Dr. Wolff. Then the khan ordered the robbers to be dreadfully flogged, in spite of their denials that they had taken so much. Little by little he extracted from them every farthing, and when all of Dr. Wolff's money had been delivered to him he counted it, and saying, "Now thou shalt see my justice," he put the whole sum into his girdle and with a benign smile said to the lone traveler, who was now left without a coin, "Go in peace."

III. THE LORD. VERSES 15-19.

15. Cast him out of the vineyard—"The prophecy was meant, if possible, at the last hour to prevent the guilt of its own fulfillment."—*Farrar*.

THIS PARABLE WAS AN EYE-OPENER to the foul conspirators against the life of Christ. It passes in review before them the treatment which had been received by the prophets from their intolerant fathers, and, as the climax of bigotry and perfidy, suggests their malicious design to slay the son of the lord of the vineyard. "What therefore," he asks, "shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others." Severe words, these. Driven from the temple, and thus despoiled of their gains, disgraced in the eyes of the people, and thus, for the time at least, shorn of their power, and now arraigned as conspirators against Him who claims to be "the rejected corner stone," priests, scribes, people, all resolved at that hour he must die.

Illustration 161. A young man who was a clerk in a grocery determined to visit every non-Christian home in his community and either sell or give the family a Bible. One morning he called at a farmhouse with his offer, where the man replied roughly: "You can't leave your book in my house. The barn is the only place fit for it. You can leave it there." "All right," answered the young man, pleasantly, "Our Saviour lay in a manger, and that will be a good place." So he carried it to the barn, and, with a prayer that it might be read, went on his way. The farmer, impressed by the boy's courtesy under abusive treatment, wondered what the Bible had to say about Jesus in the manger, and finally found the book and read it. The reading led to his conversion and the salvation of his family.

16. He shall come and destroy these husbandmen—Luke and Mark attribute these words to our Lord. Matthew credits them to the bystanders. Doubtless they were uttered by both. No one can thoughtfully read the gospel narratives without seeing that Jesus was a speaker of the most remarkable dramatic intensity, and his hearers were often carried beyond their self-control into ejaculations of this sort. **Others**—According to Matt. 21, 43, they would understand this as a distinct reference to the Gentiles. When those who should serve God are faithless God finds faithful and true laborers in their stead. **God forbid**—A cry of horror aroused rather by the enormity of the crime than by the severity of the punishment.

17. He beheld them—He looked fixedly upon them. **What is this then that is written**—Jesus is answering their cry of horror, "God forbid," and turns to the very psalm from which the hosannas of this multitude had been taken on the previous morning. **The stone**

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?	The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner?
18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but ⁵ on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.	18 Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.
19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.	19 And the scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him in that very hour; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he spake this parable against them.

⁵ Dan. 2. 34, 35; Matt. 21. 44.

which the builders rejected.—Psalm 118. 22. It is probable that in the building of Solomon's temple an important stone was brought from a distance to the temple site, and rejected by the builders as not fitting into the structure; when the chief architect's attention was called to it he showed to them that it was the most important of all. This little incident kindled the poetic instinct of the psalmist (Psalm 118. 22; Isa. 28. 16), who saw in it the choice of David to be king over Israel. Jesus reads a deeper meaning in it, for Christ himself is the chief corner stone. **Become the head**—Given the most conspicuous place in the building. Peter remembered this quotation, and made use of it more than once afterward (Acts 4. 11; 1 Peter 2. 7).

Illustration 162. "Though there were many rooms in the ark there was only one door. 'And the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof.' And so there is only one door in the ark of our salvation, and that is Christ."—*Spurgeon*.

Illustration 163. A few years ago a blind man had taken his station on the bridge over a canal in the City Road, London, and was reading from an embossed Bible. A gentleman on the way home from the city was led by curiosity to the outskirts of the crowd. Just then the poor man, who was reading in the fourth chapter of the Acts, lost his place, and while trying to find it with his finger kept repeating the last clause he had read, "None other name—none other name—none other name." Some of the people smiled at the blind man's embarrassment, but the gentleman went away with a new thought in his mind. He had lately become convinced that he was a sinner, and had been trying in many ways to obtain peace of mind; but religious exercises, good resolutions, altered habits, all were ineffectual to relieve his conscience of its load. The words he had heard from the blind man were like music to his soul. "None other name," was the message which awoke him to a new life. He said: "I see it all. I have been trying to be saved by my own works, my repentance, my prayers, my reformation. It is Jesus, alone, who can save. 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'"

18. **Whosoever shall fall . . . shall be broken**—The preaching of Christ was a stumbling-block to the Hebrews, and everyone who tripped over this stumbling-block lost immeasurably, morally and spiritually; his earthly life was broken, and his chances of a heavenly life greatly diminished. **On whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him**—This refers to the finally impenitent, who are subjects of the wrath of God.

19. **Sought**—Discussed various expedients for violently taking away his life without the knowledge of the people. The chief priests and scribes were maddened into rage. "The more light there was before their eyes the more hatred there was in their hearts." **They feared the people**—One fact must be kept clearly in the mind of the student of the gospels if he would understand the strange way in which Jesus seems to suddenly swing from the height of popularity to the depths of popular infamy. The divine charm of his words captured the common people every time they listened to him; but nearly all that he said ran counter to their prejudices and judgments and earlier religious training; so that when they were away from him their feelings were ready, under the guidance of the hostile priests, to react; but the moment they came near to Jesus they were under the sway of his regal voice. **For they perceived**—That is, the people perceived. The hypocrites did not dare to act openly against Jesus now.

Illustration 164. How did these husbandmen ever grow to be so bad? When at first they rented the vineyard they doubtless intended to pay the rent, but little, unnoticed, hardly noticeable, influences and impulses to rebellion and cruelty gradually operated upon their minds. You do not see the operations by which a man becomes wicked. "There are," writes *M. Mallot*, the French traveler, in his account of African fever, "many examples of people sleeping on the borders of the marsh, who pass from the arms of sleep to the arms of death." *Lancet* tells of thirty persons who one day walked near the mouth of the Tiger. A wind suddenly blew from the shore across the infectious marshes, and immediately twenty-nine of the thirty were taken with tertian fever. Whence comes small-pox, scarletina, typhus, yellow fever, the Asiatic cholera? What power engenders them? What power dissipates them? Direct or indirect contact and undulation of the atmosphere. So our moral atmosphere is filled with evil influences, but God has given us not only power to repel them, but the curative power to ease the sin-sick soul and restore moral health.

Illustration 165. The chief priests perceived that Jesus had spoken this parable against them, and though they made bad use of their intelligence we may well take to ourselves a lesson from their quick perceptions. Our Lord spoke this parable to us quite as truly as to them; let us be sure to make personal application of it. "Some years ago," says a writer in *Sunday at Home*, "when looking over my bookshelves I noticed a volume with a red cover, entitled *A Guidebook to Norway*. I took it down carelessly, saw it had pretty pictures, strange names, plenty of careful directions, and various anecdotes about Norway. The book, however, had no special interest for me, so, after amusing myself with its pictures and stories, I put it back." That is the way too many use the Bible. "But years afterward," continues the writer, "I made up my mind to make a tour in Norway. Happening to look along the same shelf that book again caught my eye, and now I took it down impatiently, and felt, as I pored over its pages, that every word was addressed to me." That is the way this parable should impress us—will inevitably impress us if we understand our own relations to God and Christ.

CHRIST THE REVEALER OF MEN'S MORAL CONDITION.

1. WHEREVER CHRIST CAME MEN ARRANGED THEMSELVES ON HIS SIDE OR AGAINST HIM: there were no neutrals. And the dividing line between his friends and his foes was not at all the same as that which the world had drawn between moral and immoral people. The highest officers of the Hebrew Church, some of the most illustrious teachers, and even a Pharisee who was generous enough to become his host, found themselves already arrayed against him by the very force of their moral condition; while the publican of Jericho, the woman who was a sinner, and the outcast demoniac chose him and his virtues as soon as he was revealed to them.

2. WHEN MEN DISPUTED OR QUESTIONED CONCERNING CHRIST HE ALWAYS TURNED THEIR ATTENTION TO THEIR OWN CONDITION—as in the case of the Samaritan woman, the disciples at Emmaus, and in this case. These men hardly knew their own wickedness till the Lord told this parable, but when they perceived that he "had spoken it against them" they sought to lay hands on him in that very hour.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The best plan for teaching this parable is to present each of its elements, and the interpretation thereof, separately. Notice as an introduction: 1. The *time*; on the last day of the Saviour's public teaching, the Tuesday before his crucifixion. 2. The *place*; in one of the courts of the temple, perhaps the court of the women, called also "the treasury." 3. The *circumstances*; Jesus, having successfully met all the attacks of the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, now turns upon them with this parable as a revelation of their spirit and their coming doom.

I. **The Lord of the Vineyard.** God is here represented as the only and supreme Lord of all men and owner of all things. We regard ourselves as possessors of property, but our tenure is for a brief time only. God alone is the owner of the earth. He claims our service and a share in our gains as his right, for our gains are his gift to us.

II. **The Husbandmen.** These were the men to whom the lord of the vineyard gave the lease of his property for a time. They in turn were to give to him a certain part of the fruit,

just as now farms are let "on shares." They represent, primarily, the Jewish nation, to which God gave certain privileges. But there is a lasting and universal application to every man, Jew and Gentile, for God has given gospel privileges to all. Every reader of this parable may find his own name upon it. What has God given to you? What has God a right to expect of you? How have you received God's call?

III. The Vineyard. This is a figure, often used in the Old Testament, of the peculiar privileges of Israel under the old covenant. As the people of God, Israel enjoyed the revelation of God's will, the knowledge of salvation, the law, the service, and the ministry of the prophets. The same privileges are now given to all who have received the Gospel of Christ. Every man has a vineyard of God's grace, and should render to God a due return. Count up God's gifts to you and think what you can give back to him.

IV. The Servants. These messengers of the owner to the husbandmen represent the prophets of the Old Testament. See how the picture here given is illustrated from the history of such men as Elijah, Micaiah, Zechariah, Jeremiah, and other prophets. It is just as true of the apostles and preachers of the Gospel. Note how Stephen and Paul and Peter and James were treated; what reward for their testimony was given to such men as Polycarp and Ignatius and Ridley and Latimer.

V. The Son. It needs no explaining of the fact that Jesus here refers to himself. This

parable was spoken on Tuesday, and on Friday morning he was dragged outside the gate of the city and hung upon the cross. He knew that even while he was speaking his murderers were listening to his words.

VI. The Application. Notice how Jesus drove the parable home on the consciences of his hearers. Forty years afterward the prophecy was fulfilled. The husbandmen were miserably destroyed, and the rejected Stone has become through the centuries since the head of the corner. Let us be faithful husbandmen.

GOD'S VINEYARD	
LET TO	
THE JEWS.	ME.
THE KINGDOM OF GOD.	OPPORTUNITIES. PRIVILEGES. BLESSINGS.
FRUIT REQUIRED.	
RIGHT	KNOWING. DOING. TEACHING.
THESE	I SHALL I
REJECT THE	SERVANTS. SON?
WHAT ACCOUNT SHALL I RENDER?	

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS VIII AND IX.

1. Three questions by the Jewish rulers (Matt. 22. 15-40; Mark 12. 13-34; Luke 20. 20-40). 2. Christ's unanswerable question (Matt. 22. 41-46; Mark 12. 35-37; Luke 20. 41-44). 3. The discourse against the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 23; Mark 12. 38-40; Luke 20. 45-47). 4. The widow's two mites (Mark 12. 41-44; Luke 21. 1-4). 5. Gentiles seeking Jesus (John 12. 20-36). 6. The Jews' rejection of Christ (John 12. 37-50). The discourse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, from which Lesson IX is taken, is given in full in Matthew, chapters 24, 25, and the first two verses of chapter 26; Mark 13. 1-37; Luke 21. 5-38, which last passage our Lesson Committee recommends to be read in connection with the teaching of the lesson. All these items are dated on Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30.

LESSON IX.—MAY 31.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM FORETOLD.—LUKE 21. 20-36.

(Read chapter 21. 5-38.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.—Luke 21. 33.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30.

PLACES.—Mount of Olives and Jerusalem.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 24. 15-21, 32-42; Mark 13. 14-37.



OCCASION OF THIS DISCOURSE.—Our

Lord had just concluded within the temple precincts, and in the hearing of an eager multitude, his denunciation of the Pharisees. Leaving the temple never more to reenter it, he crossed the brook Kidron and slowly ascended Olivet, which rises two hundred and seventy feet above the temple mount. There was more than a prophet's burden on his heart. Every foot of the ground which he was treading was historic and sacred. The future was unrolling itself to his gaze—his own future, the future of the Jews of Jerusalem, of the world. Reaching a secluded and sheltered spot, he seated himself. It was drawing toward evening. The wearied populace were dispersing toward their homes. Peter, James, John, and Andrew seated them-

selves beside him and began conversation. By and by the entire group of the brethren clustered around. In words of awful majesty and solemn pathos he proceeded to depict impending calamities, the very scene of which lay stretched before them. Wise counsel was blended with prophetic utterance. When men are led to expect certain signs of the occurrence of great events they are apt to get into a state of feverish excitement; ordinary duties of life are neglected for the great event which is to give new duties. The contemporaries of the disciples were terribly punished by the authorities of the Roman empire for the useless rebellions which they inaugurated under the leadership of the fifty false Messiahs who appeared before the fall of Jerusalem. Against such deeds and doom Christ effectually fortified his followers.

LESSON HYMN.—

Lord, ere the last dread trump be heard, And ere before thy face we stand,
Look thou on each accusing word, And blot it with thy bleeding hand.
And by the love that brought thee here, And by the cross, and by the grave,
Give perfect love for conscious fear, And in the day of judgment save.

Mrs. Cecily F. Alexander.

HOME READINGS.—Monday (May 25), Trouble and comfort, Luke 21. 5-19. Tuesday, Destruction of Jerusalem Foretold, Luke 21. 20-36. Wednesday, Jerusalem in prosperity, Psalm 122. Thursday, Wept over, Luke 19. 37-48. Friday, "Ye would not," Luke 13. 31-35. Saturday, Jerusalem destroyed, Isa. 64. Sunday, The heavenly Jerusalem, Rev. 21. 1-7, 22-27.

Authorized Version.

20 ¹ And when ye shall see Je-ru'sa-lem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21 Then let them which are in Ju-de'a flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22 For these be the days of vengeance, that ² all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Revised Version.

20 But when ye see Je-ru'sa-lem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation

21 is at hand. Then let them that are in Judæ'a flee unto the mountains; and let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the coun-

22 try enter therein. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written

¹ Matt. 24. 15; Mark 13. 14. — ² Dan. 9. 26, 27; Zech. 11. 1.

I. WOES. VERSES 20-24.

20. Jerusalem compassed with armies—This would be the sign that the end had come for temple, city, and people.

21. Then let them . . . flee—"An opportunity to flee was afforded by the course of events. Cestius Gallus, the Roman prefect, made an attack on Jerusalem in the fall of A. D. 66,



THE MOUNTAINS OF JUDEA.

but was beaten off, and retreated. It was not till the beginning of A. D. 70 that Titus inaugurated the final siege. Thus time and warning were afforded to those that believed Christ's prophecy."—*Abbott*. History informs us that the Christians fled to Pella beyond Jordan, and so escaped when Jerusalem was destroyed. **Let not them that are in the countries enter**—These might naturally enter Jerusalem either for protection or to reinforce it.

22. Days of vengeance—Not days in which one people takes vengeance upon another, but in which God accomplishes his judgments upon his enemies. The stamp of divine retribution was impressed upon the fate of Jerusalem and the temple, even for heathen eyes. Titus wrote that "God was so angry with this people that even he feared his wrath if he should suffer any grace to be shown to the Jews." He refused every mark of honor on account of the victory obtained, saying he was "only an instrument in God's hands to punish this stiff-necked people." **All things which are written**—A reference to Old Testament prophecies, such as Lev. 26. 14-23; Deut. 28. 15; 29. 19-28; Dan. 9. 26, 27; Zech. 11. 14-17.

Authorized Version.

23 ³ But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Je-ru'-sa-lem shall be trodden down of the Gen'tiles, ⁴ until the times of the Gen'tiles be fulfilled.

25 ⁵ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon

Revised Version.

23 may be fulfilled. Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress upon

24 the ¹ land, and wrath unto this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Je-ru'-sa-lem shall be trodden down of the Gen'tiles, until the times of the Gen'tiles be fulfilled.

25 And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the

³ Matt. 24. 19.—⁴ Dan. 9. 27; 12. 7; Rom. 11. 25.—⁵ Matt. 24. 29; Mark 13. 34; 2 Peter 3. 10, 12.

¹ Or, earth.

23. But woe unto them—Compassion is expressed for tender mothers unfitted for rapid flight. The language is not that of imprecation, but of bitter lament and deep sympathy. **Great distress in the land** (or earth)—The distress upon the earth in general, and wrath upon the Jewish people, cut off the possibility of refuge, whether in or out of Judea. The destruction of Jerusalem is a signal instance of divine wrath in human history.

24. Fall by the . . . sword, and shall be led away captive—According to *Josephus* the number of the slain amounted to 1,100,000, while 97,000 were dragged as prisoners to Egypt and the provinces. **Jerusalem shall be trodden down**—Titus ordered it to be razed so completely as to look like a spot which had never been inhabited. **Of the Gentiles**—The city has repeatedly changed possessors—Roman and Saracen, Norman and Turk—but has never been possessed by the Jews since the Romans destroyed it. **Until the times of the Gentiles**—This carries the prophecy past our own time, and covers the period during which the Gentiles hold the Church of God in place of the Jews. **Be fulfilled**—This is taken to teach that one day Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down by its present Mohammedan occupants.

Illustration 166. "Two rabbis," says a Jewish legend, "as they drew nigh to Jerusalem, saw a fox running upon the hill of Zion, and Rabbi Joshua wept, but Rabbi Eliezer smiled. 'Wherefore dost thou smile?' said he who wept. 'Nay, wherefore dost thou weep?' asked Eliezer. 'I weep,' replied Rabbi Joshua, 'because I see what is written in the Lamentations fulfilled, 'Because of the mountain of Zion which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it.' 'And therefore do I smile,' said Rabbi Eliezer, 'for in the sign that God hath fulfilled his threatenings I see a pledge that not one of his promises shall fail.'"

Illustration 167. "Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a fruit that, unsuspected, ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it. Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect always blooms in the cause, the end pre-exists in the means, the fruit in the seed."—*Emerson*.

Illustration 168. Severe laws operate to keep the physical universe pure. Whatever is stagnant and injurious must be cleared away. Terrible forces stand ready to annihilate rottenness. In the river is the crocodile; in the ocean creeping things with insatiable appetites; in the heavens the vulture, eager and cruel; in the air insects full of blind wrath, created to devour, as fire is to burn. As sure as death and filth are seized upon in the physical universe and cleansed away, so surely nothing that defileth in the moral universe shall escape the judgment of Him who cannot look upon iniquity.

II. SIGNS. VERSES 25-31.

25. There shall be signs—Immediately referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, but ultimately connected with Christ's final coming. **Sun, . . . moon, . . . stars**—In the prophetic style the sun, moon, and stars represent states and their princes and nobles, and the darkening or eclipsing of them their destruction (Ezek. 32. 7, 8). Not fewer than twelve thousand Jewish nobles perished in the siege of Jerusalem. Fearful signs in the realm of nature will herald the day of the Lord (Jer. 4. 28; Joel 2. 30). Tremendous physical disturbances are plainly foretold by St. Peter (2 Peter 3. 10-12). The boundary line between the literal and figurative, imagination and reality, can only be determined by the event itself. It is useless to attempt to

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ;	earth distress of nations, in perplexity for
26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are com- ing on the earth : ⁶ for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.	26 the roaring of the sea and the billows ; men ² fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on ³ the world : for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.
27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.	27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great
28 And when these things begin to come to	28 glory. But when these things begin to
⁶ Matt. 24. 29. — ⁷ Matt. 24. 30 ; Rev. 1. 7 ; 14. 14.	² Or, <i>aspiring</i> . — ³ Gr. <i>the inhabited earth</i> .

fix the meaning of each detail of the picture. **Distress of nations**—Literally, *a shutting up*, as of men in a besieged city. Escape would be impossible. In the animal world important alterations in the atmosphere are instinctively perceived ; an impending calamity sometimes incites a presentiment which makes the courageous pale with terror ; so the fear aroused by Christ's coming would lie heavy on guilty hearts. **The sea and the waves roaring**—The picture is partially interpreted by what occurs during an earthquake on the seacoast.

26. Men's hearts failing—Not merely as in a swoon, but utter collapse. Heat, anxiety, or sorrow may reach such a degree that the tension causes loss of life. **The powers of heaven shall be shaken**—"The sustaining and working forces of the heavenly system with their influences for the earth finally giving way."—*Stier*. "The expression has, probably, reference to those spiritual hierarchies, which having an intimate connection with 'the prince of the power of the air' exert a maleficent influence over the earth as the home of men. These powers shall be shaken at the time when the new heavens and the new earth are about to emerge."—*Morison*.

Illustration 169. "The word of God holds up before mankind two great days—the first and the last. The first was when he spake this earth into form ; the last when it shall be dissolved. The world we inhabit had a birthday ; it will have a deathday. As the body we occupy was born and must die, so this planetary body had its cradle, and shall have its grave. As our frames to the presence of diseases that can destroy them, so this godly frame of earth testifies to the presence of diseases that could instantly and easily destroy it."—*Glover*.

Illustration 170. During the last two or three centuries upward of thirteen fixed stars have disappeared. One of them, situated in the northern hemisphere, presented a peculiar brilliancy, and was so bright as to be seen by the naked eye at midday. It seemed to be on fire. It appeared at first of a dazzling white, then of a reddish yellow, and, lastly, of an ashy pale color. Laplace supposes that it was burning up, as it has never been seen since. The conflagration was visible about sixteen months. A whole system on fire ; the great central luminary and its planets, with their possible plains, mountains, forests, villages, cities, and inhabitants, all in flames consumed ; and here we have a presumptive proof of the truth, and a solemn illustration, of a singular passage in a very old book, "The heaven shall pass away with a great noise ; the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the world also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up."

27. See the Son of man—Matthew says (24. 30), "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man," evidently something distinct from himself. As before our Lord came to destroy Jerusalem appalling portents were seen in the air, so before his personal appearing something analogous will be witnessed. **Coming in a cloud**—The same luminous cloud we read of so often in the Pentateuch ; the same bright cloud enveloped him on the Mount of Transfiguration ; it received him as he was taken up. The words are to be understood as immediately applicable to the coming of our Lord at the destruction of Jerusalem. He is represented as coming in this manner in a figurative as well as literal sense (Dan. 7. 13 ; Isa. 19. 1 ; Nahum 1. 3). **Power and great glory**—An allusion to his royal retinue, magnificent appearance, and judicial authority.

Illustration 171. "He disparages the beauty of the sun who inquires for a rule to know when the sun shines or the light breaks forth from the chambers of the east, and the Son of man shall need no other signification but his inherent glory."—*Parker*.

28. These things—The promised signs of Christ's coming. There is no doubt that the

Authorized Version.

pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for ⁹ your redemption draweth nigh.

29 ⁹ And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

Revised Version.

come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he spake to them a parable: Behold
30 the fig tree, and all the trees: when they now shoot forth, ye see it and know of your own selves that the summer is now
31 nigh. Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the

* Rom. 8. 19, 23. — * Matt. 24. 32; Mark 13. 28.

reference is to the fate of the city and the ruin of the Jewish power. **Then look up, and lift up your heads—**“The metaphor is of one sitting down in grief with bowed head, who on the coming of succor lifts up the head to receive the word and let it awaken hope.”—*Abbott*. **Your redemption—**From the oppression of ecclesiastical despotism by the total subversion of the Jewish state and the firm establishment of the evangelical kingdom. After the fall of Jerusalem the growth of Christianity was more rapid than it had been during the first thirty years of its existence. The earnest Christian will discern a deeper meaning between the lines. He watches for an advent that will be the sure herald of his redemption from all the painfulness of this life—the dawn of millennial justice, charity, and peace.

29. A parable—In the sense of a simple comparison. **The fig tree—**In our Northern States the melting of the snow is the great mark of the approach of summer, but in a land like Palestine, usually without snow, the budding of the trees would be the significant sign.

30. When they now shoot forth—Our Lord spoke this on the Mount of Olives, where fig trees were growing all around him. As it was springtime the trees were doubtless beginning to verify the words by opening signs of the season. *Dr. Thomson*, on sight of a fig tree leafing forth March 21, explained its maturity from the fact that it was in a sheltered spot where summer came early. **Summer is now nigh—**Its outriders have arrived, and it will soon follow in its chariot of flowers and fruits.

31. These things—The “things” specified in their question (verse 7). When ye see the train of calamitous events passing, know that the ruin which is included in the train is near. **Nigh at hand—**Or, as in Matthew, *at the doors*, like the Roman at the temple portal.

SIGNS IN THE KINGDOMS OF NATURE AND GRACE. 1. One God is King of both. 2. He

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A FIG TREE.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled,	32 kingdom of God is nigh. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished.
33 ¹⁰ Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.	33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.
34 And ¹¹ take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.	34 But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a
35 For ¹² as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.	35 snare: for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth.
36 ¹³ Watch ye therefore, and ¹⁴ pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and ¹⁵ to stand before the Son of man.	36 But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

¹⁰ Matt. 24. 25.—¹¹ Rom. 12. 13; 1 Thess. 5. 6; 1 Peter 4. 7.
¹² 1 Thess. 5. 2; 2 Peter 3. 10; Rev. 3. 3; 16. 15.—¹³ Matt. 24. 42; 26. 13; Mark 13. 33.—¹⁴ Chap. 12. 1.—¹⁵ Psalm 1. 5; Eph. 6. 12.

sends signs of natural changes and of moralevents. 3. At signs in nature men prepare; much more should they make spiritual preparation for the greater event. 4. The natural sign speaks the faithfulness of the God of nature, so the moral sign speaks of his faithfulness as the God of grace.

III. FULFILLMENT. VERSES 32-36.

32. This generation—The generations of men are clearly not intended, nor the race of the Jews, but the generation of men then living, all of whom should not die before the accomplishment of these prophecies. This is proof that what our Lord had been saying related principally to the destruction of Jerusalem.

33. Heaven and earth shall pass away—True science underlies the statement. The visible universe was once exceedingly different from what it is now; in time to come it will be folded up as a worn-out vesture. Consider the physical nature of the moon—an immense cinder. Consider the splinters of asteroids and the planetary gaps in which they move. Is there not evidence that star-suns have been used up and their light blown out? **My words shall not pass away**—Nothing, apparently, is so fugitive as words; and the words of Christ were not reduced to writing by him or in his lifetime; yet they have proved more enduring than monuments, temples, cities, even civilizations, and shall outlast the world itself.

34. Overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness—These words refer, not merely to gross sins, such as gluttony and intemperance, but to all excesses which tend to quench spirituality. "Surfeiting" is a medical word, and is in keeping with the warning against all forms of sensualities and worldliness. **Cares of this life**—Anxious unrelaxing attention to secular business. Not only should what is unlawful be entirely avoided, but that which is lawful should be used with wisdom and with the consciousness that it is uncertain and temporary. **Come upon you unawares**—Not merely suddenly, but *unlooked for*, unprepared for. The true Christian, however surprised, will rejoice at the coming of the Son of man.

35. As a snare—If the Bible afforded material for foretelling even approximately the time of the coming of the Son of man this would not be true.

36. Watch ye—At every season, under every condition, watch against self-indulgence; in prosperity, against ease and security; in trial, against burdensome cares. **Accounted worthy**—Not be worthy, but *reckoned* worthy. Here is the germ of justification by faith. **To escape**—He escapes who is not carried away by persecutions, brought to apostasy by misleaders, or robbed of courage by trial. **Stand before the Son of man**—Not to *stand*, as in our English Version, but be *accounted* as worthy to be made to stand before him by his grace. The evidence of our faith is obedience manifested in a life of watchfulness and prayer.

Illustration 172. "Perhaps at the very moment when we deem ourselves most secure we are most in danger. A sleeping passion, or a foe in ambush, may be ready to break out upon us and work our ruin. The birds do not see the fox at hand when he is going to play his most dangerous trick, for then he lies extended, as if dead, and eyes the birds on the hedges and trees, and, if they come within his reach, pounces upon them and kills them. 'Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed.'"—*Spurgeon*.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

Much in this lesson is covered with mystery. Whether it is to be understood literally or figuratively, whether it foretells events that are to come suddenly or to unfold slowly, whether it predicts a visible or a spiritual coming of Christ—all these questions may well be left to leaders in scholarship. But we can find in these verses certain principles relating to **The Kingdom of God**.

I. It brings destruction. Verses 20-22. The ushering in of a new epoch means the breaking up of an old system. Chaos must precede order. So to-day the strifes of labor and capital, the socialist cries, the political upheavals which seem destructive of order, are the signs of better things to come.

II. It brings distress. Verses 23-26. Look at the persecutions of the early Christians in the age of Nero and of Trajan. See what the Reformers endured by the rack, the gibbet, and the stake. God's people must not expect to be exempt from trouble, from suffering, from the evils of the time. Yet the true follower of God and the citizen of his kingdom will have joy in his afflictions, peace in trial, and a hundredfold recompense.

III. It brings hope. Verses 27, 28. While terror and destruction stalk abroad God's people are in contrast with others. They see in all these things the signs of the Lord's coming. They lift up their heads, for their deliverance draweth nigh.

IV. It requires faith. Verses 29-33. The kingdom of God demands a watchful spirit, which springs from faith in the word of Christ. We should see in every movement of society, even in its darkest aspects, the tokens that God is at work, overruling and overturning for the completion of his own purposes.

V. It requires self-denial. Verses 34, 35. The spirit of the world is to mind the things of the flesh, to seek for pleasure, to burden oneself with the cares of life. The spirit of Christ's kingdom is to live for higher aims and to seek for spiritual rewards.

VI. It brings reward. Verse 36. He who watches and waits and works shall escape from the woes that are to come upon the earth, and shall stand accepted before the Son of man.

WATCH AND PRAY,

THAT YE MAY BE

WORTHY TO STAND.

MY SALVATION.

DELIVERANCE
FROM
DEATH

THROUGH THE
RIGHTEOUSNESS
OF THE
REDEEMER.

"IN THE LORD IS ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS AND STRENGTH."



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS IX AND X.

1. Conspiracy between the chief priests and Judas (Matt. 26. 1-5, 14-16; Mark 14. 1, 2, 10, 11; Luke 22. 1-6). This conspiracy was made on Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30, the date of the last lesson. 2. The next day, Wednesday, April 5, was a day of retirement, probably spent in Bethany. 3. Thursday, April 6, was the last day our Lord spent with his disciples. **LESSON X** is taken from one of his latest conversations. The full account of the last supper is given in Matt. 26. 17-30; Mark 14. 12-26; Luke 22. 7-30; John 13. 1-30. Christ's farewell discourses are reported in Matt. 26. 31-35; Mark 14. 27-31; Luke 22. 31-38; John 13. 36-38.

LESSON X.—JUNE 7.

WARNING TO THE DISCIPLES.—LUKE 22. 24-37.

[Carefully read Luke 22. 1-65.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.—Phil. 2. 5.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Thursday evening, April 6, A. D. 30.**PLACE.**—An upper room in a house in Jerusalem.

ENVIRONMENTS.—After the discourse on the Mount of Olives Jesus continued his walk to Bethany, where he spent Wednesday and Thursday morning in retirement. Thursday afternoon he sent Peter and John to Jerusalem to prepare for the passover, and toward evening he went there with his disciples. Assembling in the upper room a little after sunset the “strife” of which our lesson speaks became the topic of our Lord’s discourse, which led to the washing of the disciples’ feet and to the counsels contained in John 13. 1-20. Then the traitor was pointed out and given the sop, after which he withdrew. The institution of the Lord’s Supper was followed by the warning to Peter, and by the long discourse recorded in John 14-16. Luke alone tells of this contention among the disciples.

LESSON HYMN.—

Father, whate’er of earthly bliss Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at thy throne of grace, Let this petition rise:
Give me a calm, a thankful heart, From every murmur free;
The blessings of thy grace impart, And make me live to thee.
Let the sweet hope that thou art mine My life and death attend;
Thy presence through my journey shine, And crown my journey’s end.—*Anne Steele.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (June 1), The last passover, Luke 22. 10-28. *Tuesday*, Warning to the Disciples, Luke 22. 24-37. *Wednesday*, Gethsemane, Luke 22. 39-58. *Thursday*, Peter’s denial, Luke 22. 54-62. *Friday*, Teaching by example, John 13. 1-11. *Saturday*, Lessons from the example, John 13. 12-20. *Sunday*, Humbled and exalted, Phil. 2. 1-11.

Authorized Version.

24 ¹ And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 ² And he said unto them, The kings of

Revised Version.

24 And there arose also a contention among them, which of them is accounted to be

25 ¹ greatest. And he said unto them, The

¹ Mark 9. 34; chap. 9. 46.—² Matt. 20. 25; Mark 10. 42.³ Gr. *greater*.

I. TRUE GREATNESS. VERSES 24-30.

24. There was also a strife—It seems that this strife took place when the disciples first took their seats at the passover table. There had probably been many disputes of the same sort previously. See Luke 9. 46; Matt. 18. 1; Mark 9. 34; Matt. 20. 23; Mark 10. 37. *Dr. Curry’s* view may be correct, that there was not just now any manifestation of this strife, but that its existence was well known, and that our Lord calls attention to it at this supreme moment for the purpose of giving a decided admonition against its spirit. **Accounted**—Which one of them in their public life of three years had gained most influence, and had thus shown greater promise of eminence in the new kingdom?—this was the debated topic. **The greatest**—The ablest of the twelve; the fittest for the most responsible office in the new Messianic kingdom. The strife probably centered about two or three candidates. The candidates themselves may have kept silence while their partisans contended for them.

25. The kings of the Gentiles—Who went according to the “good old plan,” that “They

Authorised Version.	Revised Version.
the Gen'tiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.	kings of the Gen'tiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors.
26 ³ But ye <i>shall</i> not be so: ⁴ but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.	26 ³ But ye <i>shall</i> not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

* Matt. 20. 26; 1 Peter 5. 2.—⁴ Chap. 9. 48.

may take who have the power, and they may keep who can." The "kings of the Gen'tiles" were the conspicuous types of royal authority in that day, for the scepter had departed from Judah. The term "Gentile" is intentionally contrasted with "ye" of verse 26, in order to characterize the spirit of ambition as unbecoming to the true Messiah. See end of verse 27. But the popular Jewish idea of the Messiah was that he was to be a sort of Hebrew Cæsar or Alexander, who should rule by force and not by serving others. **Exercise lordship**—They wield the power which you think I am now about to assume. The world's ideal of moral greatness is official station. **They that exercise authority**—The ministers of state, governors, and generals. These correspond to the grade of official dignity which the disciples thought would fall to them. **Benefactors**—By a strangely incongruous usage certain old Assyrian and Egyptian despots were officially called "Benefactors." Indeed, one notes with wonder how many ambitious rulers have formally assumed this title. The list includes even Nero, Pizarro, Alva, and Napoleon. The most unscrupulous have diligently sought to persuade their fellow-beings that they were really doing good to them. That seems to have been the very price of eminence. A large majority of the good done to the human race by conspicuous men has been done from selfish motives. The purpose of aggrandizement was the ruling motive in many of what would otherwise have been the noblest achievements. All this our Lord characterizes as *wrong*.

Illustration 173.

Beware of too sublime a sense Of your own worth and consequence;
The man who dreams himself so great, And his importance of such weight,
That all around in all that's done Must move and act for him alone,
Will learn in school of tribulation The folly of his expectation.—*Courper*.

26. Ye shall not be so—The only prominence in Christ's kingdom is the prominence of service. He that does most is most royal. He whose sympathies are most alert and most practical, and who accomplishes most for the benefit of his fellows, most pleases Christ. **As the younger**—Who in all oriental countries are compelled to take relatively obscure positions. From the hour when these words were spoken to the present hour the work of God has been retarded whenever this injunction has been unheeded. **As he that doth serve**—His very knowledge that he is superior lays on him the greater obligation. There is nothing so becoming to the possessor of talent as humility. There is a royal dignity in this grace better than the titled regal stations the disciples may have been thinking of.

Illustration 174. The law of gravitation brings water down to the lowest level, and the law of love brings grace down to the humblest heart. Hence we read as the first beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Their poverty is their crown; it gives them power.

Illustration 175. A gentleman with fishing tackle and all the appliances fished all day and caught nothing. Toward night he espied a little urchin, with tackle of the most primitive order, pulling out the fish with amazing rapidity. He asked the boy to account for his success. He replied: "The fish'll na catch, sir, as long as ye dinna keep yersel' out o' sight." This is a suggestive lesson for fishers of men. They may spend much on rhetorical adornment and yet fail utterly to win men to Christ. "For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord."

Illustration 176. An incidental application. A story is told of a conceited young European who came to America and complained that he found no "upper classes" here. An American asked him what he meant by the "upper classes," and he explained that he referred to those who had never done any work, nor their fathers before them. "O," said the American, "we have

Authorized Version.

27 ⁵ For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but ⁶ I am among you as he that serveth.

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in ¹ my temptations.

29 And ⁸ I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

Revised Version.

27 For whether is greater, he that ⁵ sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that ⁵ sitteth at meat? but I am in the midst of

28 you as he that serveth. But ye are they which have continued with me in my 29 temptations; and ⁸ I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed

⁵ Chap. 12. 37.—⁶ Matt. 20. 28; John 12. 13, 14; Phil. 2. 7.—
⁷ Heb. 4. 15.—⁸ Matt. 24. 47; chap. 12. 32; 2 Cor. 1. 7; 2 Tim. 2. 12.

⁵ Gr. *reclinasth.*—⁸ Or, *I appoint unto you, even as my Father appointed unto me a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink, etc.*

many of that class of persons here, but we call them by a different name; we call them *tramps*." The reply was just, for the most respectable thing in the world is honest labor.

Illustration 177. No man who lives utterly for himself will fail, in the end, to despise himself. This lesson is finely taught in Tennyson's "Palace of Art." In this poem a man is placed before us, of fine intellectual and aesthetic powers, who, with every luxury at command, sets before him an object—to be happy, selfishly happy. He retires to dwell alone in a palace of wondrous beauty. Its summits gleam with gold. Its courts echo the cool music of fountains. In its towers are great bells moving of themselves with silver sound. Its windows gleam with gorgeous coloring. Its stately colonnades are hung with exquisite pictures culled from the choicest beauties of nature and poetry. Everywhere the eye receives, as it gazes round, some answering hue of loveliness. Here the proud man will dwell alone, neglectful of his kind. For three brief years his joy continues. Then suddenly all is changed. A cleaving curse falls on the pomp, a darkness on the glory. Deep loathing of its solitude falls on his soul. Weird haunting fears turn the palace into a ghastly tomb. Loveless, comfortless, he who seated himself above sympathy perishes for the want of sympathy. Then comes repentance bearing away the splendid robes and crying, "Make me a cottage in the vale where I may mourn and pray." His soul has learned its lesson.

Illustration 178. In A. D. 59, soon after Paul was converted, he declared himself "unworthy to be called an apostle;" as time rolled on and he grew in grace, in A. D. 64, he cried out, "I am less than the least of all saints;" and just before his martyrdom, in A. D. 65, his exclamation was, "I am the chief of sinners"—a beautiful example of the increase of humility side by side with holy service.

27. Whether is greater—That is, which does the world usually regard as the greater, the master or the servant? Of course the answer would be, "The master." But I am among you as he that serveth—To the question, "Art thou a king, then?" he would on the morrow reply affirmatively, "Thou sayest." The words we now study are commonly thought to have been connected with the act of humiliation recorded in John 13. 1-14. Paul taught that Christ's whole life was such a self-humiliation (Phil. 2. 6-8).

Illustration 179. "I am among you as he that serveth." All great men have had this spirit. A workman on Cooper Institute, having occasion to ascend a ladder, called to an old man standing near, "Here, old fellow, hold this ladder for me." The "old fellow" was Peter Cooper, by whose gift of money that noble institution was being built. He did not hesitate, but held the ladder, well content to remain unknown. Much of his life work was holding ladders for others.

Illustration 180. Earl Shaftesbury, passing a poor drunken sailor, laid his hand on his shoulder and said, "Ah, Jack, we'll make a man of you yet." That an English lord should be interested in him made the English sailor determine to be worthy of such interest, and he was reformed.

28. Ye are they—After a gentle rebuke of the jealous ambitions of the twelve the Lord refers to their unswerving loyalty. Many of the people, and not a few of the larger circle of his disciples, had forsaken him when the spirituality of his aims had been discovered (John 6. 66-71). These disciples, however, had to the present hour manifested an unshaken personal attachment to Jesus, in spite of his constant frustration of their temporal hopes, and through all the accusation and obloquy which his unpopular doctrines had elicited. In this faithfulness Jesus saw the prophecy of a true spiritual kingdom. **In my temptations**—The temptations of Jesus are represented as being almost continuous.

29. I appoint unto you a kingdom—These are perhaps the most wonderful words ever spoken on earth. A young mechanic, of a despised race, distrusted by one half of his own

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, ¹⁰ and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Is'ra-el.	30 unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Is'.
31 And the Lord said, Si'mon, Si'mon, behold, ¹¹ Sa'tan hath desired to have you that he may ¹² sift you as wheat:	31 ra-el. Si'mon, Si'mon, behold, Sa'tan ⁴ asked to have you, that he might sift you
⁹ Matt. 8, 11; chap. 14, 15; Rev. 19, 9.— ¹⁰ Psalm 49, 14; Matt. 19, 28; 1 Cor. 6, 3; Rev. 3, 21.— ¹¹ 1 Peter 5, 8.— ¹² Amos 9, 9.	⁴ Or, obtained you by asking.

countrymen, and on the eve of a clearly foreseen death of ignominy, claims for his dozen pitiful followers, who were just about to desert him in his hour of need, a rank and dignity greater than any earthly potentate possessed. Poor himself, without where to lay his head, he parcels out to each of these men "a kingdom," and tells them that they shall be his vicegerents and shall "sit on thrones." Truly this is a sublime and entirely unique self-consciousness. And yet he acts as their menial and washes their feet. His words were partly fulfilled by the sway the apostles and their successors bore over men's hearts. Even to-day are not Peter, John, and Paul the real rulers of the world? But the chief reference, unmistakably, is to the time when Christ shall take full possession of the kingdom, and when his disciples shall share his glory and authority. **As my Father hath appointed unto me**—These disciples are thus chosen to discharge duties which had been committed to Israel's true Messiah.

Illustration 191. "I knew a girl who grew so saintly that everyone wondered. She became ill, and a friend obtained permission to open a locket which she constantly wore. Engraved on the inside was this verse, 'Whom having not seen, we love.' If we reflect the glory of the character of Christ we shall be changed from glory to glory—that is, from character to character. I think if Paul had lived in these times he would have used the photograph instead of a mirror as a figure of speech. No one can tell how the impalpable shadow which appears on the plate is fastened there. So we cannot tell how character is changed. We are God's reflection in the world."—*Drummond*.

30. Eat and drink at my table—How ignoble is the strife for earthly precedence waged by those who are the princes of God; whose houses, thrones, dominions are "eternal in the heavens!" There is not, nor ever will be, any earthly government which can secure to its highest officials privileges so great as this. **Sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel**—The twelve tribes of Israel were, in the ancient world, the organized Church of God, and they stand as a type of that Church in this passage. The fate of the chosen people would be determined by their attitude toward the message yet to be declared by these disciples. This strange passage may mean much more than this; but this much seems to be plainly declared, in the world to come all Christ's servants are to share in some unknown manner his offices and be invested with some of his dignity (1 Cor. 6, 2, 3).

NOTE, 1. Love of preeminence is an old sin. **2.** True greatness comes through humble service. **3.** Suffering is linked with honor.

WE CAN SHOW OUR FIDELITY, 1. By tender sympathy for mankind. **2.** By deep devotion to the divine will. **3.** By intense zeal for the progress of Christ's kingdom.

II. TRUE COURAGE. VERSES 31-37.

31. Our Lord's exclamation to Simon brings together in a peculiar way plural and singular pronouns. It might be rendered, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan obtained you [plural] that he might sift you as wheat; but I [emphatic] prayed for thee [singular] that thy [singular] faith fail not, and thou when thou hast turned [that is, to God] confirm thy brethren." (*Cook*.) **May sift you**—May bring their defects to the surface. And he did so; when the test came the ruling party saw all his disciples forsake him and flee. **Sift you as wheat**—In Palestine wheat and flour were shaken in a sieve to separate the good from the refuse and dirt. So in Peter's case the weakness and strength were revealed to himself and to others only by his temptation. (See note on next verse.) And to this day our great enemy would wreck all good effort, blast every loving heart, and turn out of the way all feet that follow Jesus.

Authorized Version.

32 But ¹³I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: ¹⁴and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

34 ¹⁵And he said, I tell thee, Pe'ter, the

Revised Version.

32 as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish

33 thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to

34 prison and to death. And he said, I tell

¹³ John 17. 9, 11, 15.—¹⁴ Psalm 51. 13; John 21. 15-17.—
¹⁵ Matt. 26. 34; Mark 14. 30; John 13. 38.

Illustration 182. The Chinese have a deep saying: "Water is yielding, but when subjected to extreme cold it forms ice and solidifies; gold is solid, but when subjected to extreme heat it melts and liquefies and is then yielding; so the character of a man is not brought out until he has been pushed to the direst extremity."

32. But I have prayed for thee—Against the *demand* of Satan is the *prayer* of Christ. He prayed for all the disciples; yet as Peter was the one in greatest danger he pleaded for him with special and discriminating earnestness. **Thy faith fail not**—Christ's prayer was not that Peter might be spared the trial, but that his faith might prove equal to it. "And Peter was sifted," writes *Whedon*, "but it was the chaff, not the wheat, that was got rid of." His courage did for a time fail; but the conviction divinely wrought in him at Cæsarea Philippi, that Jesus was the Christ, never left him even at the trial (verse 62). **Converted**—"Turned again." Resumed his public profession of the doctrines taught by Jesus. This was an indirect prophecy of Peter's fall, the point of which he was prompt to feel and resent. There is special emphasis in the command **strengthen thy brethren**, for the apostles must have been sadly enfeebled by Peter's apostasy; but this command is noteworthy that it is to go into effect *after conversion*. Christian grace in ourselves must precede Christian work for others.

Illustration 183. As the forester constructs a strong framework around the sapling until it becomes a strong tree, so we need help in our earlier experiences.

Illustration 184. "To overcome is to know that the one great power in the universe is our power. A man makes himself full of strength only as the trumpet makes itself full, by being held to the mouth of the trumpeter."—*Phillips Brooks*.

Illustration 185. A friend was visiting a lighthouse, and said to the keeper, "Are you not afraid to live here?" "No, I'm not afraid. We never think of ourselves here." "Never think of yourselves! How is that?" "We only think of having our lights burning brightly, and keeping the reflectors clear, that those in danger may be saved." Christians are safe in a house built on a rock, and now they must forget themselves and work for the salvation of others.

Illustration 186. Some of the great jewelers have discovered a more effective method of securing their establishments than by the old-fashioned method of bolts and bars and iron shutters; all through the night the lights are left brilliantly burning, and the gold and gems are found to be most secure in the simple shelter of the light. Walking with Christ he will make known to us every threatened danger. He is the Light of the world.

33. Lord, I am ready—The world is pretty nearly divided between those enthusiastic souls who are always ready to incur risk without preparation, and those conservative individuals who are so elaborate in their preparation that they never get ready. Confident Peter little knew his own heart or the power and wiles of the devil. He could now face prison and death for his Master. A few hours later he could not face even the taunts of a housemaid without denying his Lord. This profession of readiness was in resentment of Christ's warning and of the imputation of weakness which it made.

34. I tell thee, Peter—A form of words indicating the gravest earnestness. If some incident of the civil war pictured General Lee, in a climactic and pivotal moment, conversing with General Jackson and accosting him as "Stonewall," few would doubt that the mere use of that nickname on such an occasion was full of meaning, and that the elder general intended by its use to recall to the younger one certain characteristics which he was understood to have. Now, Jesus had given Simon this surname, or, as we in modern phraseology would say, nickname, Peter, "Stone," "Rock," and of all the conversations with his disciples recorded in the gospels

Authorized Version.
cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

35 ¹⁶ And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing.

36 Then said he unto them, ¹⁷ But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

Revised Version.
thee, Pe'ter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

35 And he said unto them, When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. And he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet: ⁵ and he that hath none, let him sell his cloke, and buy a sword.

¹⁶ Matt. 10. 9; chap. 9. 3; 10. 4.—¹⁷ 1 Thess. 2. 14, 15; 2. 4; 1 Peter 4. 1.

⁵ Or, and he that hath no sword, let him sell his cloke, and buy one.

this is the only case where Jesus uses the name he had given. It is used to remind Peter of his strength as well as his weakness. **The cock shall not crow this day, before—**"To-morrow shall not dawn, before." **Thou shalt thrice deny—**The effect of this warning on Peter is very apparent in his epistles. None of the apostles dwell, more earnestly on the truth that all strength is from God and that watchfulness and humility are necessary preparations for temptation. See 1 Peter 1. 5, 7, 13; 4. 12; 5. 6-9; 2 Peter 1. 5; 2. 9. Probably Jesus made this prediction for the same reason that he told the parable of the vineyard. By the very prophecy he sought to prevent its fulfillment.

Illustration 187. "Self-conceit is the daughter of self-will and of that loud crying out about I, and me, and mine, which is the very birdcall for all devils, and the broad road which leads to death.—*Spurgeon.*"

Illustration 188. If the branches of a tree rise high in the air its roots must penetrate to a corresponding depth in the ground. So there is only one way of reaching honor, and that is by humility.

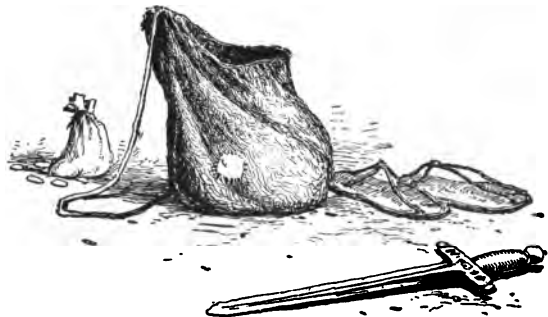
Illustration 189. A Turkish proverb declares, "A father never weeps for a timid son," meaning that the self-distrustful keep out of slippery places, and so avoid mischief and misery.

Illustration 190. "Do not sup with the devil, no matter what may be the length of your spoon, the depth of your cunning, the energy of your defense. If you eat of his supper be sure when the unclean carnival is over you will find you have only got the bones, the cayenne pepper, and the bill." *Talmage.*

35. Purse, and scrip, and shoes—The means, figuratively, of conducting their ministry.

Lacked ye anything—No, they had lacked nothing then; but they had been sent forth under conditions familiar to them and to their Lord. The towns of Galilee welcomed in that early day the ambassadors of Jesus. Things were different now. They must now, as *Dr. Whedon* quaintly says, "set up on their own account, and provide their own resources."

36. But now that you are going forth, not on a temporary mission provided for without purse or scrip, but into scenes of continued and severe trial, your *methods* must be different. Then they could depend, like the ancient prophets, on the hospitality of the people. Now there will be no hospitality; they must depend on their own foresight for provision and protection. A present Christ enjoins bare reliance on him; a present-absent Christ enjoins reliance and effort. **Scrip . . . sword—**The sword is the emblem of controversy and struggle; the



PURSE, SCRIP, SHOES, SWORD.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, ¹⁸ And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.	37 For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, And he was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath ¹⁸ fulfillment.
18 Isa. 53. 12; Mark 15. 28.	* Gr. end.

scrip is the basket which contains the food; the purse is, of course, the treasury; and by these three Jesus would indicate that his disciples, being left to their own resources, need to look forward to all manner of temporal difficulties. They would have to feed themselves, and could no longer depend on the hospitality of an eager nation. They would have to pay their way, and must be careful of the mammon of unrighteousness. They were beginning to fight the good fight of faith. It is entirely inconsistent with the teachings of the Gospel to quote these texts as justifying the using of the sword, even in self-defense, by Christian ministers or missionaries. The phrase, "Let him sell his garment," would seem to imply that the impending struggle was the most imperative and imminent of the three things.

37. This that is written—This is the first time that the Lord directs us to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the most complete outline of his passion. **Must**—He went to Calvary as willingly obeying the necessity which was created by his redeeming love. **Reckoned among the transgressors**—Set down in the history of the nation as a lawbreaker. If he is to be reckoned among the transgressors, his servants, too, will be the object of the world's hostility and misconception. To expect the world to help the Church is to be blind to the relation between them. **Have an end**—Are rapidly drawing to a close.

NOTE. 1. It is not enough to mean well. 2. The Christian should provide wisely against coming evils. 3. The strong should help the weak. 4. Christ's intercession for us will not set aside individual responsibility. 5. Not the lofty, but the lowly, stand on safe ground.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The title of this lesson presents a good theme for its treatment, and the Golden Text suggests a line of illustration. Draw out from the lesson a line of thought on **The Spirit of True Service**, and show how "this mind was also in Christ Jesus."

I. The Humble Spirit. Verse 24. The strife for position among the disciples shows, by the law of contraries, just what should be the spirit of a true follower. We should not seek for honor, but be clothed with humility. This mind was in Christ Jesus when he sought not the glory which was his right, but emptied himself and consented to become man. Read Phil. 2. 5-7 (Revised Version).

II. The Unworldly Spirit. Verses 25, 29. "The kings of the Gentiles, . . . but it shall not be so among you." The spirit of the world is not the spirit of the kingdom of heaven.

Find what the world does, and you will find generally what disciples should not do. Here again Christ is our example, for his life was a constant protest against worldly standards.

III. The Helpful Spirit. Verses 26, 27. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven are not those who attain to the highest position either in the State or in the Church. They are those who live the least for self and the most for their fellow-men. This mind also was in Christ Jesus: "I am among you as he that serveth."

CHRIST'S LAW OF GREATNESS.

JESUS WAS | IF I WOULD BE

GREAT

HE CAME TO | I MUST

SERVE ALL.

G LORIOUS **C**OMES FROM **S** ERVING THE

G R EATNESS **C** O M E S F R O M **S** E R V I N G T H E

LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU.

"I AM AMONG YOU AS HE THAT SERVETH."

IV. The Steadfast Spirit. Verses 28-30. "Yet ye are they which have continued with me." The Saviour promises special rewards to such as continue faithful unto the end. And he himself was the best example of steadfastness, for, "having loved his own which were with him in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13. 1).

V. The Loyal Spirit. Verses 31-34. Here Simon Peter is at once a warning and an example—a warning by reason of his unfaithful denial of his Master in the face of warning, but an example because down in his heart throughout the trial there was a spirit of loyalty and of love. Let us be like Peter, the rock, not like Simon, the shifting sand.

VI. The Truthful Spirit. Verses 35-37. Already Christ had put their trust to the proof by requiring them to go forth "without scrip, and purse, and shoes." Yet they had lacked nothing. So now, he who trusts in Christ shall have all and abound.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

The spirit of true service, *Andrew's* "Life of our Lord," 460-477; *Ederheim's* "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," ii, 495-508; *Geikie's* "Life and Words of Christ," ii, 438-445; *Farrar's* "Life of Christ," ii, 276-292. Crowing of the cock, *Farrar*, ii, 347; *Geikie's* "Holy Land," ii, 193; *Thomson's* "Land and Book," ii, 551, 552; Purse and scrip, *Expositor*, First Series, vi, 312-320. Christ praying for us, *Ederheim*, ii, 535. Peter's denial, *Andrews*, 493-496; *Ederheim*, ii, 550-564; *Geikie*, ii, 496. Sermons: *F. D. Maurice*, "The Ministers of Christ;" *E. B. Pusey*, "Humility;" *T. D. Woolsey*, "Peter Helped by his Fall to Strengthen his Brethren;" *H. E. Manning*, "Daily Service a Law in God's Kingdom;" *H. B. Melville*, "The Least of Service to the Greatest;" *J. Summerfield*, "Peter's Apostasy."



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS X AND XI.

1. The intercessory prayer, uttered probably shortly before midnight after April 6, A. D. 30 (John 17). 2. The agony in Gethsemane, about midnight at the beginning of April 7 (Matt. 26. 30, 36-46; Mark 14. 26, 32-42; Luke 22. 39-46; John 18. 1). 3. The betrayal and arrest (Matt. 26. 47-56; Mark 14. 43-52; Luke 22. 47-53; John 18. 1-12). 4. The trial before the Jewish authorities (Matt. 26. 57-27. 10; Mark 14. 53-15. 1; Luke 22. 54-71; John 18. 12-27). 5. The trial before Pilate (Matt. 27. 11-31; Mark 15. 1-20; Luke 23. 1-25; John 18. 28-19. 16). 6. The procession to Calvary (Luke 23. 26-33).



LESSON XI.—JUNE 14.

JESUS CRUCIFIED.—LUKE 23. 33-46.

[Read from Luke 22. 66 to 23. 56.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.—1 Cor. 15. 3.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Friday, April 7, A. D. 30.

PLACE.—**Calvary** (Golgotha), outside the walls of Jerusalem. The true site of the crucifixion can now be only matter of conjecture. It was near the city (John 19. 20), and it must probably lie by the side of some one or other of the leading roads. As it was outside the city walls (Heb. 13. 12), it was probably different from the spot where now stands, within the walls of Jerusalem and in connection with the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the chapel of Golgotha. The tradition which identifies the spot with this building is traceable to

the fourth century. The site is far more likely to be found at the north side of the city, near the grotto of Jeremiah.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 27. 31-36; Mark 15. 21-41; John 19. 16-42.

ORDER OF EVENTS ON THE CROSS.—1. The taste of wine and myrrh (Matt. 27. 34; Mark 15. 23). 2. The crucifixion. 3. The thieves. 4. The prayer, "Father, forgive them." 5. The accusation written. 6. The garments divided. 7. The railing and mocking by people, priests, and soldiers. 8. The railing malefactors. 9. The penitent thief. 10. The gazing friends. 11. The mother and Son. 12. The three hours of darkness. 13. The loud cry. 14. The last words (John 19. 30; Luke 23. 46). 15. The bowed head. 16. The veil of the temple rent, the earthquake, the rocks rent, the graves opened. 17. The confession of the centurion and of the people. 18. The blood and water (John 19. 34).

LESSON HYMN.—

Alas! and did my Saviour bleed? And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head For such a worm as I?
Was it for crimes that I have done, He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown! And love beyond degree!
But drops of grief can ne'er repay The debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself away,—'Tis all that I can do.—Isaac Watts.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (June 8), Accused and mocked, Luke 23. 1-12. *Tuesday*, Innocent, yet condemned, Luke 23. 13-26. *Wednesday*, Jesus crucified, Luke 23. 33-46. *Thursday*, Numbered with transgressors, Mark 15. 22-32. *Friday*, The cross foreseen, John 12. 20-33. *Saturday*, He suffered for us, 1 Peter 2. 19-25. *Sunday*, Blessed results, Rom. 8. 31-39.

Authorized Version.

33 And when they were come to the place, which is called ^a Cal'va-ry, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Revised Version.

33 And when they came unto the place which is called ¹ The skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

^a Matt. 27. 33; Mark 15. 22; John 19. 17.—*a* Or, *The place of a skull*.

¹ According to the Latin, *Calvary*, which has the same meaning.

I. LOVE FOR ENEMIES. VERSES 33-38.



A SCOURGE.

33. The place, which is called Calvary—Or, more accurately, "the place which is called The skull." The Hebrew name is *Gulgoleth*; the Greek, *Kranion*; the Latin, *Calvarium*; the English, *The skull*. The word "Calvary" in the common English Version is not a translation from the Greek, but a word transferred from the Latin Vulgate. The place was so called from its supposed resemblance to a human skull. Calvary may have been a little elevated, but it could hardly have been a mountain or large hill. The knoll containing the grotto of Jeremiah seems to meet the conditions of the problem regarding the site. It is about a hundred yards from the city wall, is sixty feet high, and rounded in form. **Crucified him**—Among the Jews there were four modes of executing criminals—beheading, strangulation, burning, and stoning. The cross was a Roman mode of execution reserved for slaves and the vilest of the race. Three kinds of crosses were in use, but the form used here was doubtless the Latin cross. The feet and hands were probably nailed to the cross while it lay upon the ground, and then it was raised with its quivering

burden so that the feet would be a foot or two above the earth. **The malefactors**—These were desperadoes, brigands, of a sort with which the country was infested. They had been reserved until one of the great feasts for execution as a more influential warning to the people. **Right hand, and . . . left**—To hold him up as the worst of the three.

Authorized Version.

34 Then said Je'sus, Father, ³ forgive them; for ² they know not what they do. And ⁴ they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

35 And ⁵ the people stood beholding. And the ⁶ rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

Revised Version.

34 ² And Je'sus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they

35 cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if

³ Matt. 5. 44; Acts 7. 60; 1 Cor. 4. 12. — ² Acts 2. 17. — ⁴ Matt. 27. 35; Mark 15. 24; John 19. 23. — ⁵ Psalm 22. 17; Zech. 12. 10. — ⁶ Matt. 27. 39; Mark 15. 29.

³ Some ancient authorities omit *And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

34. Father, forgive them—While this prayer was probably uttered as they were nailing him to the cross, or as it dropped with a sudden wrench into its place in the ground, it included not merely the Roman soldiers who harshly executed the sentence, but also the Jews who had maliciously planned his condemnation. His first and last recorded prayers begin with "Father." **Know not what they do**—"Ignorance diminishes, but does not annihilate sin. If there were no sin there needed no pardon. Christ's prayer procured pardon, but personal faith was needed to possess it."—*Maclaren*. **They parted his raiment**—The clothes of the victim became the perquisites of the four soldiers who acted as executioners (John 19. 23). The four garments thus divided were the head gear, sandals, girdle, and the *tallith*, or square outer garment with fringes. **And cast lots**—For the inner garment, which was of one piece, and covered the body from head to foot. Amid the most solemn scene in history the unconscious actors sit down to gamble.

PRAYING FOR ENEMIES. "Prayer for a man's self is indeed a choice duty, yet it is but a kind of lawful and pious selfishness. But when I pray as heartily for my enemy as I do for my daily bread; when I strive with prayers and tears to make God his friend, who himself will not be mine; when I reckon his felicity among my own necessities, surely this is such a love as in a literal sense may be said to reach up to heaven."—*South*.

Illustration 191.

"Pray for one another! Jesus prays for you; Follow those dear footsteps,— Pray for others too. Think how, hanging, quivering, On that cross he cried, 'Father, O, forgive them!' just before he died."

Illustration 192.

"No radiant pearl, which crested Fortune wears, No gem, that twinkling hangs from Beauty's ears, Not the bright stars, which Night's blue arch adorn, Not rising suns that gild the vernal morn, Shine with such luster as the tear that flows Down Virtue's manly cheek for other's woes."—*Darwin*.

Illustration 193.

"My heart was heavy, for its trust had been Abused, its kindness answered with foul wrong; So, turning gloomily from my fellow-men, One summer Sabbath day I strolled among The green mounds of the village burial place; Where, pondering how all human love and hate Find one sad level; and how, soon or late, Wronged and wrongdoer, each with meekened face And cold hands folded over a still heart, Pass the green threshold of the common grave, Whither all footsteps tend, whence none depart, Awed for myself and pitying my race, Our common sorrow, like a mighty wave, Swept all my pride away, and trembling I forgave."

—*Whittier*.

35. The people stood beholding—Many gazing, as at any spectacle, with only morbid curiosity; some awed as they gazed on the dying form of Him whose tender words and mighty deeds thronged their memories. **The rulers . . . derided him**—They felt the hush of awe-struck contemplation was dangerous, so hastened to begin their mockery to deafen the voice which was striving even in themselves. **He saved others**—Without wishing or willing it, they must attest the greatness of him whom they are most deeply outraging. **Let him save himself**—Sin had encircled sinners with penalty, so that he who would save them must pass *through* it. As a Saviour he could not save himself. But their taunt merely held him up to reproach as an impostor.

Illustration 194. I would much rather have it for an epitaph on my tombstone, "He served his generation," than "He saved his own soul." For I am certain that if I deserved the first I should

Authorized Version.

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

Revised Version.

36 this is the Christ of God, his chosen. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to

have done the second. Think if our Lord Jesus had saved himself. If he had demanded the twelve legions of angels and come down from the cross, what would have been the result? Man would not have been redeemed, Christ would not have been crowned as the object of worship to a world that takes its name from him. There would have been no model of faithfulness, self-sacrifice, truth, and purity for the admiration and imitation of humanity. It is because he did not think of saving himself that he wrought the great salvation for others.

Illustration 195.

Royal Free Hospital, circumstances which miration. A child, ing from diphtheria, patient's life, to per- the windpipe was theretic matter was through a tube. Dr. lantly performed the suffering from pre- he succumbed soon staff and of his rel-

Dr. Samuel Rabbeth, senior medical officer of the Gray's Inn Road, London, died in 1882 under elicited widespread expressions of sympathy and ad- aged four years, was admitted to the hospital suffer- and it was found necessary, in order to save the form the operation of tracheotomy. When, however, opened, it was found that the accumulation of diph- such that it could only be removed by sucking it Rabbeth, with a full knowledge of the risk, gal- operation. Some days afterward he found himself liminary symptoms of the terrible disease, to which afterward in the presence of the hospital medical atives and friends.



ROMAN SOLDIERS CASTING LOTS.

36. And the soldiers also—Rough men, inured to war and bloodshed, they followed the example of scoffing set by priests and scribes. **Mocked him**—Perhaps holding up their cups of sour wine, sportively offering them to the sufferer, who was tortured with an agony of thirst, and then snatching them away and quaffing the drink themselves. But it is difficult to reproduce with confidence every detail of this last scene.

THREE TIMES IN THE CRUCIFIXION scene, apparently, "sour wine" was offered to Christ: 1. Matt. 27. 34. This was a draught formed of narcotics and stupefying drugs prepared by a guild of charitable women of Jerusalem. This "he tasted of" in grateful recognition of their kindness, but "would not drink," for he would not dull his senses. 2. The instance recorded by Luke in verse 36. 3. John 19. 28-30. The Lord, utterly exhausted, asked for and received this last refreshment, which revived his failing powers and gave him physical strength for his last utterances. The Roman soldiers, apparently touched by the patience and dignity of the dying Lord, did him this last office.

Authorized Version.

37 And saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself.

38 'And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Lat'in, and He'brew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Revised Version.

37 him, offering him vinegar, and saying, If

thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. And there was also a superscription over him, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

* Matt. 27. 37; Mark 15. 26; John 19. 19.

37. King of the Jews, save thyself—The soldiers repeated the words of cruel mockery which had fallen from the lips of the chief priests and scribes. When the story of the crucifixion was first told to the Franks in ancient Gaul, their chief cried out, "If I and my warriors had been there we would have saved him!" But His not saving himself made him able to save others. His cross gave him crowns and thrones to give to his followers.

33. Letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew—This clause is omitted in the Revised Version, but is given in John 19. 20. **King of the Jews**—The inscription rather announced a fact than intimated an impeachment. Because they had got him to act against his own sense of justice Pilate thus cast insult on the Jews as well as their King. Christ was condemned by the Sanhedrin because he said, "I am the Son of God." He was executed by the Romans because he claimed to be the King of the Jews. The injustice was that he was not executed for the crime for which he was tried, nor tried on the charge for which he was executed. It was customary for the Romans, on any extraordinary execution, to put over the head of the malefactor an inscription denoting the crime for which he suffered. Several examples of this occur in Roman history. It was also usual at this time at Jerusalem to post up advertisements, which were designed to be read by all classes of persons, in several languages. Titus, in a message which he sent to the Jews when the city was on the point of falling into his hands, and by which he endeavored to persuade them to surrender, said, "Did you not erect pillars, with inscriptions on them in the Greek, and in our language, 'Let no one pass beyond these bounds?'" In conformity to this usage an inscription by Pilate's order was fixed above the head of Jesus, written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, specifying what it was that brought him to this end. These were the languages of culture, government, and religion. The letters were written in black on a board smeared with white gypsum.

Illustration 196. What has the world done with most of its victorious champions and saviours? Its greatest benefactors have been despised, rejected, and put to death. I look down the vista of ages, and the long procession comes toward me. I know them all—the old, the saintly, the familiar faces. Socrates, condemned to drink poison, because he told the young men of his day that their religion must not lean upon the myths and fables which had accumulated around the popular deities, but should depend rather upon that inward voice of conscience which every man would hear within him just in proportion as he had his spiritual sense developed by use. Galileo, shut up because scientifically he was in advance of the age. Where are the pioneers of civilization? Where are the prophets of thought? Where are the priests of science? Where are the reformers of faith? Their bones are rotting in unknown graves, their ashes are scattered to the winds. And time would fail me to tell of the Albigenses, the victims of St. Bartholomew's day, of Palissy, of Lucilio Vanini, of Giordano Bruno; or turn to those great precursors of the Protestant Reformation, John Huss and Savonarola. Do you remember what the Bishop of Florence said to Savonarola as he cast a brand upon his burning fagot? "I cut you off from the Church militant!" "Ay," cried the heretic, "but you cannot cut me off from the Church triumphant!" And yet one more figure rises before me—One whose head is filled with dew and his locks with the drops of the night. One who spake as never man spake, and who came to seek and to save that which was lost. He placed his foot upon the serpent's head, and its fangs pierced him. He went boldly in among the cruel wheels of a disordered world and set them right, although he was torn to pieces in the act.

Illustration 197. "The wisest of Gentile thinkers, Socrates, said, 'Plato, Plato, perhaps God can forgive deliberate sin; but I do not see how.' There is only one way, a way which no human being could have anticipated. It is this—that God should identify himself with the human race. As Shakespeare has finely said, 'Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once; and He that might the vantage best have took found out the remedy.'"—*Hugh Price Hughes*.

Authorized Version.

39 ^a And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And ^a we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Je'sus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Je'sus said unto him, Verily I say

Revised Version.

39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou

40 the Christ? save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou

41 art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done

42 nothing amiss. And he said, Je'sus, remember me when thou comest ^a in thy

43 kingdom. And he said unto him, Verily I

^a Matt. 27. 44; Mark 15. 32.—^a Lev. 24. 40; Josh. 7. 19, 30; Ezra 9. 13.

^a Some ancient authorities read *into thy kingdom*.

II. PARDON FOR SINNERS. VERSES 39-43.

39. One of the malefactors . . . railed on him—Matthew and Mark represent both thieves as reviling Christ. The discrepancy may be met by supposing either that both did so at first and one changed, or that the plural "thieves" was meant to denote the quarter or class from which the latest taunt came. Not only were passers-by, ecclesiastics, and soldiery represented in the scoffing, but even Christ's fellow-sufferers. **If thou be Christ**—The language of the brigands indicates that both were Hebrews. They were probably Galilean zealots who, believing in a coming Hebrew kingdom, made their patriotism a cover for robbery and murder, and had finally been arrested and condemned.

40. The other answering rebuked him—In the wide range of our Lord's ministry he may have heard Christ's preaching and been impressed with his character. The loftiness of Christ's bearing, his transparent purity and remarkable meekness, the prayer for his murderers, the inscription over the cross, and the shades of miraculous darkness gathering over the scene of violence became to this thief windows through which he saw the true King of Israel hanging by his side. **Dost not thou**—"Let others jeer, but dost thou." **Fear God**—"Thy righteous Judge, whom thou art within an hour or two of meeting, whose frown is visible in the supernatural darkness." **The same condemnation**—Under a like sentence on a like cross. All three, probably, were condemned to death on the charge of sedition against the Roman government. The thieves knew that Christ had no share in their seditious designs.

41. We indeed justly—He owns the worst of his crimes and deserts, and would fain shame his fellow into the same. **Nothing amiss**—This was more true than he thought. The testimony presupposes a knowledge of our Lord's past history.

NOTE, 1. His frank confession and genuine self-condemnation. **2.** His horror at the different state of his fellow's mind. **3.** His anxiety to quickly bring him to a better state of mind. **4.** His testimony to Christ's innocence and the implied rightfulness of his claims.

42. He said unto Jesus—Revised Version, "said, Jesus, remember me."—Believing in the real royalty as well as in the pitifulness and power of this kingly Sufferer, he makes a humble appeal for remembrance. **Into thy kingdom**—Though the last garment had been taken from him, he saw that this despised, forsaken Victim, would one day come as a King in great glory.

OBSERVE, 1. The kingdom he saw was beyond the grave. **2.** It was Christ's own. **3.** Christ had the right to dispose of it to whom he pleased. **4.** The thief does not ask a place there, but only that Christ will not forget the poor wretch who once hung by his side. **5.** His faith was wonderful, despite previous disadvantages, bad life, apostasy of Christ's friends. This was perhaps the only living soul that just then believed in Jesus.

43. Jesus said unto him—His suppliant had cheered his own soul in the midnight gloom. The slightest movement on the cross would intensify physical agony; yet Christ turned to address him. **Verily I say unto thee**—The well-known words with which in other days he had begun

Authorized Version.

unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

44 ¹⁰ And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the ^b earth until the ninth hour.

45 And the sun was darkened, and ¹¹ the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

46 And when Je'sus had cried with a loud

Revised Version.

say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

44 And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole ⁴ land

45 until the ninth hour, ⁵ the sun's light failing: and the veil of the ⁶ temple was rent

46 in the midst. ⁷ And when Je'sus had cried

¹⁰ Matt. 27. 45; Mark 15. 33.—^b Or, land.—¹¹ Matt. 27. 51; Mark 15. 38.

⁴ Or, earth.—⁵ Or, the sun failing.—⁶ Or, sanctuary.—⁷ Or, And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said.

his sacred sayings. **To-day**—Not indefinite futurity, but before this scorching sun shall set. **In paradise**—Not purgatory. The word denotes a garden-park, and was applied by the Jews to the abode of the pious in the spirit world and to the highest heaven. This passage proves the existence of the human soul separate from the body, and also the happy consciousness of the justified soul immediately after death.

DEATHBED REPENTANCE. While true repentance is never too late, experience proves that late repentance is seldom true. Let none despair, but let none presume.

THE PENITENT THIEF SAW the kingdom beyond the cross. "Great man—piercing mind—audacious thinker! Is there a man here of such spirit and temper? It is not in man, it is a revelation of the Holy Ghost. God opens strange mouths to speak his truth. Did not this dying thief say more in that interview with Christ than some of us have ever said in our lives? He defended him, he hailed him Lord, he ascribed to him a kingdom, he triumphed over death, he saw the crown above the cross. Christianity invites and encourages vigor of intellect."—*Joseph Parker.*

III. TRUST IN GOD. VERSES 44-46.

44. Darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour—For three awful hours Jesus hung dying in the dark, amid a silence unbroken except by a cry of desertion and agony. "All the earth" does not necessarily imply the whole globe. What was the immediate cause of this darkness we do not know. It symbolized God's wrath.

45. Veil of the temple was rent—This veil separated the Holy from the Most Holy Place. Its rending indicated that a new way was consecrated whereby all believers could come into the presence of God; perhaps also it meant the departure of God from the temple.

46. When Jesus had cried—This was after he had received the sour wine, which restored



THE ARCH OF ECCE HOMO, IN VIA DOLOROSA.

Authorised Version.

voice, he said, ¹³ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: ¹⁴ and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Revised Version.

with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost.

¹³ Psalm 31. 5; 1 Peter 2. 23.—¹⁴ Matt. 27. 50; Mark 15. 37; John 19. 30.

him sufficiently to render audible the last two sayings, "It is finished," and the commending of his spirit to the Father. **Father**—The consciousness of his filial relationship is again clear. The sacrifice is accepted and the horror of spiritual death is overcome before the advent of physical death. The strong cry is the voice of perfect trust. **I commend my spirit**—This is more than an act of trust; it is a definite expression of the voluntariness of his death. The mental grief and agony of soul far outweighed the physical torture, and so crushed his frame that he did not linger on in exhaustion as the malefactors did.

THE LESSON SUGGESTS A PILGRIMAGE TO CALVARY ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

1. What seest thou there? 2. What feelest thou there? 3. What confessest thou there? 4. What promisest thou there?

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

It is a significant fact that the day of Christ's death is narrated in greater detail than any other day in all the history of the Bible. The cross is the most prominent object in the landscape of Scripture. Let us look at this sufferer on Calvary. What do we see in him?

I. **A Voluntary Sufferer.** Verse 33. He whose look had smitten his enemies to the ground in the garden could have saved his life if he had willed it. See John 10. 18. He laid down his life that through death men might live.

II. **A Forgiving Sufferer.** Verse 34. This prayer was in behalf of those concerned in his death, just in proportion to their ignorance of what they were doing; most of all for the Gentile soldiers, next for the ignorant common people, less for the intelligent rulers. Each man is held accountable to the measure of his knowledge and understanding.

III. **A Hated Sufferer.** Verse 35. Sometimes the greatest benefactors of the world have been pursued with the bitterest hatred; for example, Socrates, Paul, Savonarola. See *Robert Browning's* poem, "The Patriot." If we are persecuted let us see that it is for righteousness, sake, not for wickedness' sake.

IV. **An Atoning Sufferer.** Verses 35, 36. "He saved others; himself he cannot save." How could he, if he were saving others? He forgot himself, emptied himself (Phil. 2. 7, 8), and died for men. We know not how, but somehow he died as our substitute.

V. **A Kingly Sufferer.** Verses 37, 38. The sentence upon the cross and the taunts of the soldiers bore witness to a great fact. He who hung there was indeed a king, though his crown was of thorns. He came of a royal line, possessed a royal authority, and wielded a royal

power. From that hour until now the true Israel has submitted to the scepter of the divine sufferer.

VI. **A Redeeming Sufferer.** Verses 39-43. He opened the door of heaven by his power to the repentant robber, just as he opens it to every penitent sinner, who offers a similar prayer.

VII. **A Dying Sufferer.** Verses 44-46. He died, and in his death evil seemed to triumph. But in reality it was the conquest of sin, of death, and of Satan.

ON THE CROSS.

A GREAT PRAYER.

"FATHER, FORGIVE THEM."

A GREAT SALVATION.

"TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME
IN PARADISE."

SUCH A PRAYER | SUCH A SALVATION
INCLUDES | INVITES

ME.

HOW SHALL I ANSWER?

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS XI AND XII.

1. The burial (Matt. 27. 57-61; Mark 15. 42-47; Luke 23. 50-56; John 19. 38-42). This occurred on the afternoon of Friday, April 7, A. D. 30. 2. The watch at the sepulcher (Matt. 27. 62-66). This is to be dated April 8, A. D. 30. 3. The resurrection morning (Matt. 28. 1-10; Mark 16. 1-11; Luke 23. 56-24. 12; John 20. 1-18). 4. The report of the watch (Matt. 28. 11-15). 5. The walk to Emmaus (Mark 16. 12, 13; Luke 24. 13-35). 6. The appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem, Thomas being absent (Mark 16. 14; Luke 24. 36-43; John 20. 19-25). The last four incidents occurred on Sunday, April 9, A. D. 30. The four next to be mentioned are of uncertain date, except the last. 7. The appearance to Thomas with the other disciples (John 20. 26-29). 8. The appearance to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21. 1-24). 9. The appearance to the eleven on the mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28. 16-20; Mark 16. 15-18). 10. Christ's last appearance and his ascension (Mark 16. 19, 20; Luke 24. 44-53). This occurred on Thursday, May 18, A. D. 30; at least that is the most correct reckoning that can now be made. We have included in this paragraph of Connecting Links several passages parallel to the verses of LESSON XII, for the reason that at the very last none of the apostles are chronological in the telling of the story. They so overlap that the only way to get a continuous view is to read on to the end.

MYRRH-BEARERS, THEN AND NOW.

Three women crept at break of day, Agroped along the shadowy way Where Joseph's tomb and garden lay;
Each in her throbbing bosom bore A burden of such fragrant store As never there had lain before.
Spices, the purest, richest, best, That e'er the musky East possessed, From Ind to Araby the blest.
Had they, with sorrow-riven hearts, Searched all Jerusalem's costliest marts, In quest of nards whose
pungent arts
Should the dead sepulcher imbue With vital odors through and through, 'Twas all their love had leave to do.
Christ did not need their gifts; and yet Did either Mary once forget Her offering? Did Salome fret
Over those unused aloes? Nay! They did not count as waste that day What they had brought their
Lord. The way
Home seemed the path to heaven. They bear Henceforth about the robes they wear The clinging per-
fume everywhere.
So ministering, as erst did these, Go women forth by twos and threes Unmindful of their morning ease—
Through tragic darkness, murk and dim, Where'er they see the faintest rim Of promise—all for sake of
Him
Who rose from Joseph's tomb. They hold It just such joys as these of old To tell the tale the Marys told.
Myrrh-bearers still, at home, abroad, What paths have holy women trod, Burdened with votive gifts to
God!
Rare gifts whose chiefest worth was priced By this one thought, that all sufficed: Their spices have been
bruised for Christ.—*Margaret J. Preston.*



LESSON XII.—JUNE 21.

THE RISEN LORD.—LUKE 24. 36-53.

[*Read the whole chapter, Luke 24.*]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord is risen indeed.—Luke 24. 34.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Sunday evening, April 9, A. D. 30.

PLACE.—A room in Jerusalem.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Mark 16. 13, 14; John 20. 19-23.

THE APPEARANCES OF JESUS.—Jesus on the day of his resurrection appeared to his disciples five times. To Mary, to the women, to Peter, to Cleopas and his friend as they walked to Emmaus, a village seven or eight miles from Jerusalem, and to the apostles on the

evening of the same day. After Christ had made himself known to Cleopas and his friend in the breaking of bread in some home or inn at Emmaus, the two returned with great joy to report the matter at headquarters. In their accustomed meeting place ten of the apostles, and other believers with them, were assembled, within carefully barred doors "for fear of the Jews." It is not improbable that the arrest of the chief followers of the risen Christ was anticipated. As they recline at the evening meal, discussing the empty sepulcher, the angelic vision, and the recital by Peter of his interview with Christ, the two disciples from Emmaus enter with their wondrous story. Unable to resist the evidence, and yet hesitating to believe, the listeners are sorely perplexed. In the midst of this circle—the first Church of his own—Christ suddenly and mysteriously appears. It was an event not merely having to do with their individual comfort, but full of significance for the world; it was the founding of the kingdom of God upon the empty sepulcher. By infallible signs our Lord overcame their unbelief.

LESSON HYMN.—

Hail the day that sees Him rise, Ravished from our wishful eyes!
 Christ, awhile to mortals given, Reascends his native heaven.
 See, he lifts his hands above! See, he shows the prints of love!
 Hark, his gracious lips bestow Blessings on his Church below!
 Saviour, parted from our sight, High above yon azure height,
 Grant our hearts may thither rise, Following thee beyond the skies.—Charles Wesley.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (June 15), The wonderful story, Luke 24. 13-24. *Tuesday*, The Scripture explained, Luke 24. 25-35. *Wednesday*, The risen Lord, Luke 24. 36-53. *Thursday*, The last miracle, John 21. 1-11. *Friday*, Peter's love tested, John 21. 12-19. *Saturday*, The ascended Lord, Acts 1. 1-12. *Sunday*, Ever living, Rev. 5. 6-14.

Authorized Version.

36 ¹ And as they thus spake, Je'sus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen ² a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

Revised Version.

36 And as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, ¹ and saith

37 unto them, Peace *be* unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed

38 that they beheld a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do reasonings arise in your

¹ Mark 16. 14; John 20. 19; 1 Cor. 15. 5.—² Mark 6. 49.

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *and saith unto them, Peace be unto you*.

I. THE RISEN LORD. VERSES 36-43.

36. They thus spake—Referring to the testimony of the two from Emmaus. **Himself stood in the midst**—No one knew how he entered. He suddenly appeared in the midst of the circle without having advanced thither. No longer subject to the common conditions of bodily existence, he could enter through a closed door and withdraw from touch and sight at will. **Saith unto them, Peace be unto you**—His voice and greeting were so familiar that they would probably have recognized him from millions of others. He came not as a wrathful judge to reckon with them for their unbelief, but pronouncing peace.

37. They were terrified and affrighted—The manner of his entrance and the message of the angels directing them to meet him in Galilee might well cause surprise and fright. **Had seen a spirit**—As when he appeared to them on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 14. 26).

38. Why are ye troubled—Until pacified by him their distracted minds are not fitted to judge calmly the proof he is about to place before them. **Why do thoughts arise in your hearts**—They were trying to do what some rationalistic writers have tried to do in modern times—discover some explanation of the facts without accepting the obvious one of a real and material resurrection of his body.

Authorised Version.

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: ¹handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he showed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

41 And while they yet believed not ⁴for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, ⁵Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb.

43 ⁶And he took *it*, and did eat before them.

Revised Version.

39 heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye be-

40 hold me having. ²And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his

41 feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them,

42 Have ye here anything to eat? And they

43 gave him a piece of a broiled fish³. And he took it, and did eat before them.

¹ John 20. 20, 27. — ⁴ Gen. 45. 26. — ⁵ John 21. 5. — ⁶ Acts 10. 41.

² Some ancient authorities omit ver. 40. — ³ Many ancient authorities add *and a honeycomb*.

39. Behold my hands and my feet—He invited them first to the close inspection and calm contemplation of his pierced hands and feet. This would prove his identity. **Handle me, and see**—He would have them assure themselves that it was no phantom, no bodiless spirit,



'AMWAS, THE SUPPOSED SITE OF EMMAUS.

that stood before them. Touch would prove his corporeality. **A spirit hath not flesh and bones**—"We have here the clearest possible assertion of the independent existence of spirit." — *Whedon*. Three senses—sight, touch, and hearing—were appealed to in proof of the real physical presence of Jesus.

40. **Showed them his hands and his feet**—Apparently they now actually touched with reverence the parts indicated. Therefore John could afterward justly speak of that which their hands had handled (1 John 1. 1), while light is thrown on the language of Thomas (who was absent on this occasion). He would have the same evidence vouchsafed to the others.

41. **Believed not for joy**—They believed not at first for the strangeness of the matter; they believed not next for fear; and now they believe not for joy. And yet through all this there was a belief, but not the realizing power; it seemed too good to be true. There was also anxiety as to possible illusion. **Any meat**—As if to give them one of the most ordinary proofs of bodily existence, he called for food.

42. **Broiled fish, and . . . honeycomb**—No doubt the staple of their evening meal.

43. **Did eat before them**—How they watched him as he did so! The nature of our Lord's resurrection body is and must remain to be a mystery.

Authorized Version.

44 And he said unto them, *These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Mo'ses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*

45 Then ⁸ opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,

Revised Version.

44 And he said unto them, *These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Mo'ses, and the prophets, and the*

45 *psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the*

⁸ Matt. 16. 21; 17. 22; 20. 18; Mark 8. 31; chap. 9. 22; 16. 31; ver. 6.—⁹ Acts 16. 14.

Illustration 198. It is related of Father Giorda, the founder of a Roman Catholic mission to the Indians in the Kallispel country, that one day he was listening to a group of Indian boys amusing themselves with an echo in the mountains. One of the boys made an exclamation, whereupon the priest ran joyfully back to the mission, crying, "This is one of the happiest days of my life. For eleven years I have vainly sought the right word for echo in Kallispel, and now I have it!" Such joy as this has been felt by every intellectual seeker when the object sought has been found. How much greater is the joy which floods the heart of Christendom when the longed-for evidence of immortality is at last unmistakably discovered. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

Illustration 199. The Loss of Faith. "What a fly is whose head is cut off, that has no steering power, and, using its wings and legs, whirls round and round, preliminary to dying, that a man is who has lost his faith. He is a headless insect."—*H. W. Beecher.*

II. THE WORD OPENED. VERSES 44-49.

The next six verses record not the sayings uttered on this first Easter evening; but contain, rather, a general outline of the teachings of the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension. In them we have a summary of what the Church is to believe and proclaim till the end; on these truths the whole Gospel hangs.

44. These are the words—A retrospective review of his almost accomplished earthly career. **While I was yet with you**—The period of his sojourn with men was past. His abode now was elsewhere. He was not with them in the sense that he had been before the crucifixion. Then he permanently and visibly abode with them; now his coming was exceptional. The old association was not fully restored by the resurrection. **Law . . . prophets . . . psalms**—The three Jewish divisions of the Old Testament Scriptures. He taught his relation to the Old Testament, recalling former declarations, dark then, but sun-clear now. No longer need they doubt when this whole train of strange events is but the fulfillment of his sayings and of the holy Scriptures.

45. Then opened he their understanding—By a direct internal enlargement and enlivening of their spiritual faculties. Christ has immediate access to the human spirit and absolute power over it; learning alone will not give spiritual discernment. **Understand the Scriptures**—This new spiritual insight became one of the great instruments of their success as preachers. "The opening of the disciples' understanding is, in all probability, as stupendous a miracle as any in the Lord's history. That men should in a moment receive a power of mental comprehension which they had not before, and that this power should enable them to see the true import and meaning of a book which had hitherto been closed to them, seems greater than any acts of healing, or feeding of multitudes, or stilling of tempests. It implies divine power over our spiritual and intellectual nature, such as God only can exercise. And yet it is the commonest of all miracles, and the one which survives among us. To many—we may say to all—who submit their wills and understandings to God the Scriptures are unlocked, and a new light is shed on every part of them, especially upon the works and words of our Lord."—*Sadler.*

Illustration 200. "While at prayer meeting to-night I learned more of the meaning of some passages of Scripture than ever before. Suitable frames of soul are like good lights, in which a painting appears to its full advantage."—*Samuel Pearce.*

Authorized Version.

46 And said unto them, ⁹ Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and ¹⁰ remission of sins should be preached in his name ¹¹ among all nations, beginning at Je-ru'sa-lem.

48 And ¹² ye are witnesses of these things.

49 ¹³ And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Je-ru'sa-lem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Revised Version.

46 scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day;

47 and that repentance ⁴ and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the ⁵ nations, beginning from Je-ru'sa-

48 lem. Ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

⁹ Ver. 26; Psalm 22; Isa. 50. 6; 52. 2, etc.; Acts 17. 2.—
¹⁰ Dan. 9. 24; Acts 13. 38, 46; 1 John 2. 12.—¹¹ Gen. 12. 3;
Psalm 22. 27; Isa. 49. 6, 22; Jer. 31. 34; Hosea 2. 23; Micah 4. 2;
Mal. 1. 11.—¹² John 15. 27; Acts 1. 8, 22; 2. 32; 3. 15.—
¹³ Isa. 44. 3; Joel 2. 28; John 14. 16, 26; 15. 26; 16. 7; Acts 1.
4; 2. 1, etc.

⁴ Some ancient authorities read unto.—⁵ Or, nations. Beginning from Jerusalem, ye are witnesses.

46, 47. Behooved Christ to suffer—These words were probably spoken on that first Easter evening. The Old Testament showed the necessity of an atoning Redeemer from the sin which it everywhere reveals, and of a dying Redeemer from the death which it proclaims as the consequence. Christ defines the preacher's subject, field, mission, and power. The subject of preaching is repentance on the part of man and release from sin by the act of God in the name of Christ. The field is the world; he is to go out carrying his message among all nations. **Beginning at Jerusalem**—As the metropolis of the kingdom of God then existing, and as the great reservoir of the sin and crime of the nation.

48. Ye are witnesses—They are to testify to the truth of a Gospel the power of which they had first personally experienced. Our most efficient instrument is simple testimony from experience. Anybody who has found Christ can say so; and since he can, he ought.

49. Behold, I send—The present tense, to indicate its nearness. Christ is the authoritative dispenser of the Holy Ghost. **But tarry ye in . . . Jerusalem**—These words apparently were spoken on the day of his ascension. See Acts 1. 4. Time spent in believing expectance and desire is not wasted. Power from above must clothe us, covering our native weakness and concealing self from others and from ourselves. They were to be so penetrated by conscious supernatural power as to stamp with divine authority the whole exercise of their apostolic office, including their pens as well as their mouths. "What we have most reason to fear is that subtle materialism which is creeping into our church life and methods. How little dependence is there on supernatural power as all-sufficient for our work! How much we are coming to lean on mere human agencies!—upon art and architecture, upon music and rhetoric and social attractions! If we would draw the people to church, that we may win them to Christ, the first question with scores of Christians nowadays is, What new turn can be given to the kaleidoscope of entertainment? What new stop can we insert in our organ, and what richer and more exquisite strain can we reach by our quartet? What fresh novelty in the way of social attraction can we introduce? or what new coruscation can be let off from the pulpit to dazzle and captivate the people? O, for a faith to abandon utterly these devices of naturalism and to throw the Church without reserve upon the power of the supernatural! Is there not some higher degree in the Holy Spirit's tuition into which we can graduate our young ministers, instead of sending them to a German university for their last touches of theological culture? Is there not yet some reserve power treasured up in the Church, which is the body of Christ; some unknown or neglected spiritual force which we can lay hold of, and so get courage to fling away forever these frivolous expedients on which we have so much relied for carrying on the Lord's work?"—*A. J. Gordon.*

Illustration 201. "When I see a disciple loyally and heroically going through all the tasks of Christian service, bringing his gift and laying it upon the altar, entering into the Sabbath school, taking a share in the work and maintenance of the church to which he belongs, but going through it all

Authorized Version.

50 And he led them out ¹⁴as far as to Beth'-a-ny, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 ¹⁵And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Revised Version.

50 And he led them out until *they were over* against Beth'-a-ny: and he lifted up his

51 hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, ¹⁶and was carried up into

¹⁴ Acts 1, 12. — ¹⁵ 2 Kings 2, 11; Mark 16, 19; John 20, 17; Acts 1, 9; Eph. 4, 8.

¹⁶ Some ancient authorities omit *and was carried up into heaven*.

as if it were a pressure, I admire his heroism; but I say, 'My friend, you have need to open the high-pressure valve; you are doing too much work with too little inspiration. It will kill you. Get the inspiration, and the work will become a felicity.' — *C. A. Berry*.

Illustration 202. "Such is my belief in the reality and existence and agency of the Divine Spirit that I think I should have no hope and no faith as a minister and as a laborer for the enfran-



BETHANY.

chisement of mankind, if it were not that I believed there was an all-prevalent, vitalizing Divine Spirit. I should as soon attempt to raise flowers if there were no atmosphere, or produce fruits if there were neither light nor heat, as I should attempt to regenerate men if I did not believe there was a Holy Ghost. I have faith in the Divine Spirit spread abroad over the whole human family, which is really the cause of life in the higher directions; and it is this faith that gives me hope and courage in all labor." — *Beecher*.

Illustration 203. "Here is a noble ship. The forests have masted her; in many a broad yard of canvas a hundred looms have given her wings. Her anchor has been weighed to the rude sea chant; the needle trembles on her deck; with his eye on that Friend, unlike worldly friends, true in storm as calm, the helmsman stands impatient by the wheel. And when, as men bound to a distant shore, the crew have said farewell to wives and children, why, then, lies she there over the selfsame ground, rising with the flowing and falling with the ebbing tide? The cause is plain. They want a wind to raise that drooping pennon and fill these empty sails. They look to heaven; and so they may; out of the skies their help must come. At length their prayer is heard. . . . And now, like a steed touched by the rider's spurs, she starts, bounds forward, plunges through the waves, and, heaven's wind her moving power, is off and away, amid blessings and prayers, to the land she is chartered for. Even so, though heaven-born, heaven-called, heaven-bound, though endowed with a new heart and new mind, *we stand in the same need of celestial influences.*" — *Guthrie*.

III. THE HEAVEN OPENED. VERSES 50-53.

50. He led them out—Out of Jerusalem, where he was on the fortieth as well as on the first day. **As far as to Bethany**—It is likely that the spot where Jesus's feet last touched earth was not the conspicuous summit of Olivet, but somewhere on the eastern side of the hill, nearer Bethany. **Lifted up his hands**—As the high priest did when he had finished his service (Lev. 9, 22). The hands which had been pierced were spread above the bowed heads of the little group, and doubtless dropped spiritual gifts which fulfilled his benediction.

51. Was parted from them—The word employed implies a slow continuous motion, which

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
52 ¹⁶ And they worshiped him, and returned to Je-ru'sa-lem with great joy:	52 heaven. And they ¹ worshiped him, and returned to Je-ru'sa-lem with great joy:
53 And were continually ¹⁷ in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.	53 and were continually in the temple, blessing God.
¹⁶ Matt. 28, 9, 17.— ¹⁷ Acts 2, 46; 5, 42.	¹ Some ancient authorities omit <i>worshiped him, and</i> .

we cannot but contrast with the whirlwind which swept Elijah into heaven. Jesus was going to his own calm home, and needed no aid to raise him thither.

52. Worshiped him—In the strictest sense of adoration. **Returned to Jerusalem**—As they had been instructed to do. Not with disappointment and grief at his removal, but with great joy; now, for the first time, they understood their Lord.

53. Continually in the temple—Religious engagements occupied the whole time. Theirs was now a religion of joy. They made all life worship, every place a temple, and every act and word adoration. The pain of parting was drowned in the flow of joy which poured over their spirits, as they recognized how complete was the triumph their Master had wrought.

Illustration 204. "He is not a strong Christian who feels that he can do without sermons and sacraments, any more than it is the appetite of an energetic man when there is no relish for food. It is no sign of good faith or well-grounded hope that the Christian seems beyond needing the means of grace; as well might you think it a sign of knowledge and security against shipwreck if the mariner were above consulting his charts or making observations. 'Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.'"—*Melville*.

Illustration 205. "When He ascended up on high he opened and prepared a path along which we may travel until we behold his face in righteousness. It has been said that in the early ages an attempt was once made to build a chapel on the top of the hill from which Christ ascended into heaven, but that it was found impossible either to pave the place where he last stood, or to erect a roof across the path through which he had ascended—a legendary tale, no doubt, though told perhaps to teach the important truth that the moral marks and impressions which Christ has left behind him can never be obliterated; that the way to heaven through which he has passed can never be closed by human skill or power, and that he has set before us an open door which no man shall be able to shut."—*Dr. F. Alexander*.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

We find in this lesson **Six Gifts of the Risen Christ.**

I. The Gift of Peace. Verse 36. He brought "peace on earth, good will to men," when he was born. He brought peace to the troubled disciples by his resurrection. He has made peace between man and God, and has given peace within the heart.

II. The Gift of Joy. Verses 37-43. It is a great mistake to suppose that the coming of Christ into a house brings gloom and solemnity. Christians are not sad, but joyful. Compare the faces of a body of Christians with those of the same number of people who are leading lives of sin. Christ brings joy to every heart that he enters—"great joy" to his disciples.

III. The Gift of Knowledge. Verses 44-46. Only the eyes that are unsealed by Christ can read the Scriptures aright. He brings to men new meanings and new light in the word.

IV. The Gift of Pardon. Verses 47, 48. The greatest and deepest need of the human heart is the forgiveness of sin; and Christ alone can impart this blessing. He opens to every man the way whereby sin may be taken away.

V. The Gift of Power. Verse 49. "Ye shall receive power" was his promise;

PEACE BE UNTO YOU.

THE LORD IS RISEN.

LET ALL

DOUBTS
DISAPPEAR.

TROUBLE | PEACE

COMES WITH

THOUGHTS. | PROOFS.

"PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

and it was fulfilled. The power of the Holy Ghost fell upon the Church, and has remained with it even until now.

VI. **The Gift of Praise.** Verses 50-53. We should expect the disciples to mourn when bereft of their Master. But instead they praise God, because a new bond has been formed, uniting heaven and earth. We may rejoice with them in our Head beside the throne.



REVIEW OF THE SECOND QUARTER.—JUNE 28.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.—Luke 24. 47.

LESSON HYMN.—

What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone Around thy steps below !
 What patient love was seen in all Thy life and death of woe !
 Thy foes might hate, despise, revile, Thy friends unfaithful prove ;
 Unwearied in forgiveness still, Thy heart could only love.
 O give us hearts to love like thee, Like thee, O Lord, to grieve
 Far more for others' sins, than all The wrongs that we receive.—*Str Edward Denny.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (June 22), The lost found, Luke 15. 11-24. *Tuesday*, Lessons in prayer, Luke 18. 9-17. *Wednesday*, Parable of the pounds, Luke 19. 11-27. *Thursday*, Jesus teaching in the temple, Luke 20. 9-19. *Friday*, Warning to the disciples, Luke 22. 24-37. *Saturday*, Jesus crucified, Luke 23. 33-46. *Sunday*, The risen Lord, Luke 24. 36-53.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The Golden Text for the Review contains the words, "in His name." These words have been adopted as a motto by many thousands of young people in our time ; and we take them for the central thought of our Review. Each lesson shows us a duty, a step to be taken in the upward way of discipleship. For our design we take a throne, and the steps leading toward it. Each step is to be taken "in His name," that is, in the faith of Christ.

LESSON I. The Resurrection of Christ bids us seek a living Christ. This is the foundation of the Gospel, that our Head is not a dead man, turned to dust in a lone Syrian tomb ; but a living One, to die no more. We are to seek Him who will die no more, but will bring his followers to everlasting life.

LESSON II. The Parable of the Great Supper invites us to come to the feast. Salvation is not a life of gloom and sadness ; it is a feast of good things. The disciple of Christ has true enjoyment. And this enjoyment is not for a select few ; it is for all, rich and poor, bond and free ; whoever hears the invitation, "Come ; for all things are now ready."

LESSON III. The Prodigal Son shows us a true repentance, and urges every man to turn from sin to God. Every sinner, whatever his condition, is like the young man feeding swine and trying to satisfy his hunger with husks. As soon as he comes to himself, and realizes his high sonship, he turns from the far country to his Father's house.

LESSON IV. The Rich Man and Lazarus has both a doctrinal and a practical message. It opens to our view the world beyond the grave ; that is the doctrine. But its message of duty is in the words, "They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them." It commands every man to hear God's messengers.

LESSON V. Faith is the power by which the spiritual nature sees spiritual realities. By it the soul sees God in his heaven. Christ is our Saviour ; eternal rewards for godliness, eternal wrath against sin. The duty which this lesson sets before us is, "Have faith in Christ." By faith mountains are moved, by faith the leprosy of sin is cleansed.

SECOND QUARTERLY REVIEW.

LESSON VI. Lessons on Prayer. In this chapter four kinds of *prayer* are shown in succession, and each has an example. The widow shows persistent prayer; the publican shows prayer for mercy; the mothers bringing their children show interceding prayer—prayer for others; the rich young man shows prayer for spiritual blessings. Prayer is an important step toward the throne, for it brings man in direct relation to God.

LESSON VII. The Parable of the Pounds represents Christ as our absent Lord, who has intrusted us with the charge of his interests. Its message is, "*Be faithful.*" He who cares for the little that his Master has given to him will receive a great reward—for each pound a city; while he who neglects his trust will lose all.

LESSON VIII. Jesus Teaching in the Temple presents the parable of the wicked husbandmen. The key to the parable is the sentence, "*They will reverence my son.*" A reverence for Christ as the Son of God is essential to true faith. The ancient Jews slew him; some modern thinkers would degrade him from his high station.

LESSON IX. Destruction of Jerusalem Foretold. The motto of this lesson is the word "*Watch.*" When men saw the fig tree putting forth its leaves they knew that summer was at hand; so when Christ's disciples should see thrones tottering, armies marching, enemies persecuting, they might know that the Jewish state was about to fall, and a new epoch was to be ushered in. We are to watch for the signs of the times, and to be always ready for our Lord.

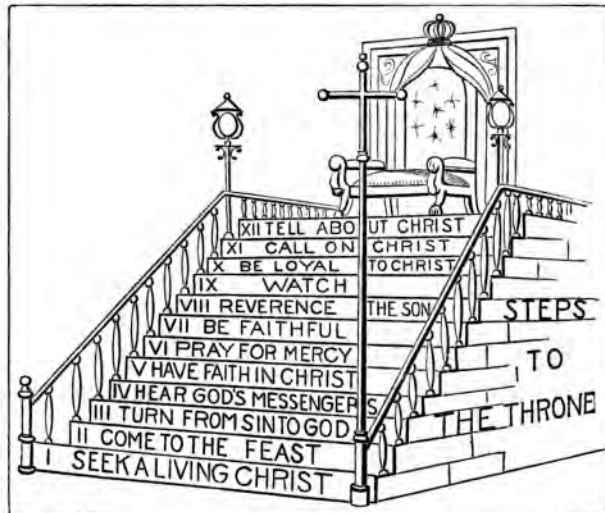
LESSON X. Warning to the Disciples. The apostles had a strife for the honors in their Master's kingdom. James would be prime minister, Peter would be chief ruler, Judas would be secretary of the treasury. In their strife they were in danger of forgetting their duty to their Lord. Our lesson says, "*Be loyal to Christ,*" and tells us that loyalty is shown by service, and shall be rewarded with honor.

LESSON XI. Jesus Crucified. Three crosses rise on the summit of the hill Golgotha; and in these three crosses the whole world is represented. In the center is the cross of salvation, with the Lord of glory hanging upon it. On one side is the cross of unbelief, bearing the impenitent thief, reviling Him who alone can save. On the other side is the cross of faith, and on it one who, confessing his sin, prays to Christ for mercy. Let us *call on Christ.*

LESSON XII. The Risen Lord. Once more we look upon Jesus, not dead but living, and alive for evermore.

He commands his disciples to go forth and proclaim salvation in his name to all mankind. The mission of every believer is to *tell about Christ.* We cannot compel men to believe in him, but we can make them to know about him, and knowledge will lead to faith.

Here are twelve steps, and above them an empty throne. Who will walk up the steps and take his seat upon it? He shall be of those who sit on thrones in the kingdom of God.



THE HEBREW AND HIS NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR.

PHŒNICIA AND ITS PEOPLE.

THE Phœnicians called themselves Kanaani (Canaanites), that is to say, "Lowlanders," and this name seems to have extended to denote the whole of Palestine. Their power began with the increase of the coast cities—Sidon (before 2000 B. C.), Gebal or Byblos (certainly not later than 2000 B. C.), Arvad, Zemer, and Arke. Phœnicia was a prosperous and very strong country, and the Israelites never conquered the coastland north of Achzib. Many Phœnician towns were, however, conquered, one of the last being Laish (Judg. 18. 27), which belonged to Sidon, and which, being at a distance from that place, fell an easy prey to the Danites, who afterward changed its name to Dan.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF ISRAEL AND PHŒNICIA.

After Israel had become settled, when David was at the height of his power, the relations between the Israelites and the Phœnicians were of a most peaceful and cordial character, and Hiram, son of Abibal, king of Tyre, became the ally of David, and sent him gifts (2 Sam. 5. 11). The Phœnicians were at that time the chief commercial power in the world, and famous for their artistic skill, not only then, but long after, as the specimens of their work show. The friendship which Hiram had shown to David he continued to his son Solomon, to whom, as we shall see, he sent costly building materials, artisans, and navigators. In return Solomon gave corn and oil, and "twenty cities in the land of Galilee," which, being of small value, did not please the Phœnician king, who showed his own superior generosity by giving Solomon "six-score talents of gold" (1 Kings 9. 11-14, 26-28). After the death of Hiram political dissensions arose. His four sons ruled, not uninterruptedly however, for short periods, and then Ethbaal, or Ithobal, father of Jezebel, who became the wife of Ahab, came to the throne.

ANCIENT LINES OF COMMERCE.

There was in ancient times a large trade in western Asia, which followed many routes, those by land being necessarily the most frequented. Caravans went from Arabia-Felix to Petrea and Gerrha, from Gerrha to Tyre, and from Phœnicia to Egypt. There were also trade routes from Lydia to Susa, and from Babylon to Phœnicia, Syria, Susa, and India. The western sea route from Phœnicia was by Cyprus or Chittim, the islands of the Ægean, Sicily, Malta, the north coast of Africa, to Tartessus (Tarshish) in Spain, near Gibraltar. Phœnician sailors seem to have ventured even beyond this, and have been supposed to have visited Britain. The eastern sea route was from Ezion-geber and Elath to Ophir. The Israelites seem to have tried to rival the Phœnicians not only in sending ships to Ophir (1 Kings 22. 48, 49), but also to Tarshish (Isa. 2. 16; Jonah 1. 3). In the earlier period it was the Midianites and Ishmaelites who went to Egypt (Gen. 37. 25; 39. 1), and later the people of Tema, the Sabeans (Isa. 21. 14; Job 6. 19), and the Dedanites (Isa. 21. 13). There was also maritime trade between Phœnicia and the Egyptian Delta, and the Babylonians or Chaldeans, "whose cry is in their ships" (Isa. 43. 14), probably did an extensive coast trade. The route to India is probably indicated in Isa. 49. 12, where the Sinim are mentioned, who are, perhaps, to be identified with the Shinas of the Hindu-Kush.

THE COMMERCE OF ISRAEL.

The use of the *maneh* of Carchemish as a standard weight at Nineveh shows how important the trade of this city had become. Trade with Babylonia is indicated by the "goodly Babylonish garment" found among the spoils of Jericho (Josh. 7. 21); the lapis lazuli (Authorized Version, "sapphires," Sol. Song 5. 14; Ezek. 28. 13) and probably other precious stones, which were imported into Babylonia from India; and, if Indian, the ivory used by the Israelites and Phœnicians (1 Kings 10. 18; 22. 39; Amos 6. 4; Sol. Song 7. 4, etc.); though it was also brought by the caravans of Arabia (Dedan) (Isa. 21. 13; Ezek. 27. 15), and the navy of

Tarshish (1 Kings 10. 22). Solomon, the wise king of Israel, saw the importance of developing the trade of his country, and it was probably mostly for this reason that he made alliance with Hiram of Tyre, who manned the Israelitish ships (1 Kings 9. 26, 27), which brought gold and other valuable things from Ophir (1 Kings 9. 28; 10. 11) and Tarshish (1 Kings 10. 22), and obtained spices and gold from the Arabian merchants (1 Kings 10. 15). The united fleets of Solomon and Hiram sailed every three years to Ophir (from which place David obtained gold, 1 Chron. 29. 4), and brought, besides the gold, silver, precious stones, ivory, sandalwood, apes, and peacocks (1 Kings 9. 28; 10. 11, 22). Solomon also caused horses and chariots to be imported from Egypt, at certain prices, apparently through the Hittite and Syrian kings (1 Kings 10. 28, 29). With the death of Solomon the prosperity (and, therefore, the trade) of the Hebrews declined, though they probably always maintained a certain number of ships for the foreign carrying trade. Jehoshaphat tried to revive the trade with Ophir (1 Kings 22. 48, 49), which, as the passage here cited implies, had generally ceased; but he was unsuccessful. Many beautiful products of oriental handicraft have in comparatively recent years met with much favor in our Western civilization, such as inlaid tabourets and carved seats, damask and embroidered draperies, Hindu metal work, Chinese porcelain and silk, Persian shawls and attar of roses, filagree jewelry, etc. We have every reason to believe that these articles were familiar to wealthy Hebrew homes in Solomon's day, for form and fashion seldom change in the Orient.

THE ART OF THE HEBREWS.

The fact that Abraham, the father of the Israelitish race, came from Ur of the Chaldees probably had some influence on the introduction of Babylonian and Assyrian forms into the art of the country, but it was the Phœnicians who were the masters of the Israelites in design; indeed, the long wanderings of the Israelites before their settlement in the Holy Land must have prevented their attaining skill in any handicraft that did not produce an actual necessity. Hence the need of employing Phœnician workmen in the building of the temple at Jerusalem (1 Kings, chaps. 5-7). The forms of decoration used by them, however, were mostly adaptations of those found in Assyria and Babylonia, though they were probably modified by the artisans who used them. The *column* was a product of Babylonian builders, and seas or reservoirs in temples (1 Kings 7. 23) also originated in that country. The plan of the temple building was probably pure Phœnician, but the devices of cherubs, palm trees, pomegranates, "knops and open flowers," lions, etc., show that the decorations were of Babylonian or Assyrian origin. The prohibition of the laws of the Israelites against reproducing living forms probably prevented their becoming great in art; hence their adoption of foreign ideas and designs and the employment of foreign workmen. The pattern of the altar which Ahaz ordered to be made (2 Kings 16. 10, 11) was not obtained from Assyria, but from Damascus. Later on, however, the Hebrews came into direct contact with Babylonia, and we therefore get, in Ezekiel (chap. 10), a description of the winged figures of Assyrian and Babylonian art, as well as of their well-known style of wall decoration, in the reference to the "men portrayed on the wall . . . after the likeness of the Babylonians of Chaldaea, the land of their nativity" (Ezek. 23. 14, 15). The Hebrews, like all the oriental nations, loved to deck themselves with jewelry—earrings, collars, chains, bracelets, armlets, anklets, plaques for the breast, and the girdle, as well as ornaments for the nose, such as are still worn in the East. In the production of all these it is probable that the Phœnicians were their teachers, as well as in the art of stone seal engraving, which they practiced. From the Phœnicians came also the art of writing, and they kept the Phœnician style of character until the captivity, when they adopted the related Aramaic style, which ultimately developed into what is now used, namely, the "square" Hebrew character. It is not unlikely that the cuneiform system, which was in use in Palestine before the entry of the Jews, still lingered after they took possession of the country, here and there, and it has been supposed that Jer. 22. 10, 11 contains a reference to the writing of a contract, in the old Babylonian style, on a clay tablet, and provided with an envelope of clay, also inscribed, so as to insure the preservation of the record. This, however, is very doubtful.

THIRD QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

- I. SILENCE.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. [Psalm 87. 3-9.]
 - SUPT. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.
 - SCHOOL. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
 - SUPT. Commit thy way unto the LORD: trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.
 - SCHOOL. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.
 - SUPT. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
 - SCHOOL. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
 - SUPT. For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.
- III. SINGING.
- IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.
- V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.
- VI. SCRIPTURE LESSON.
- VII. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE.

- I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
- II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
- III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, AND OUTLINE by the school in concert.
- IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.]
- VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings].

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
 - SUPT. My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.
 - SCHOOL. The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.
- III. DISMISSION.

FOURTH QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

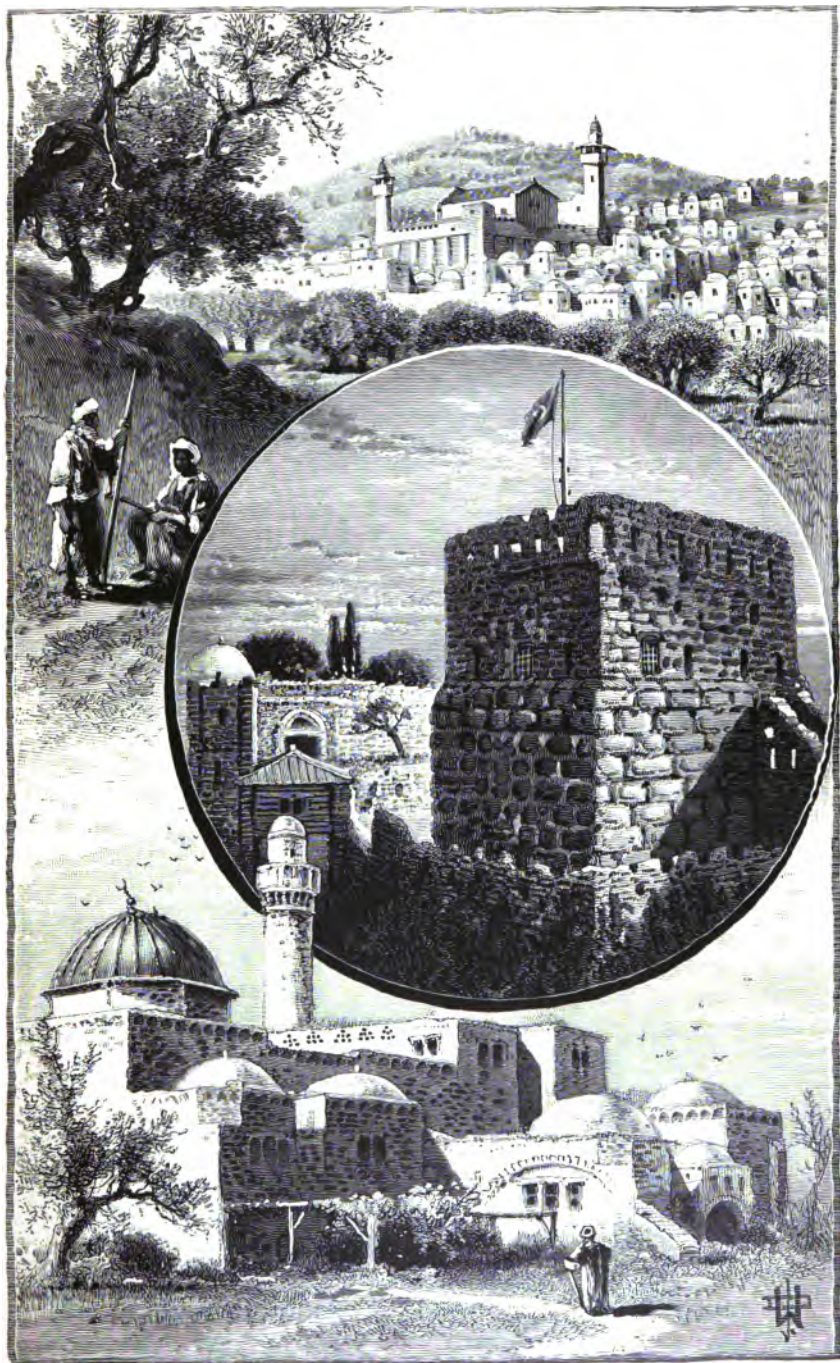
- I. SILENCE.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. [Psalm 67. 1-7.]
 - SUPT. God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us;
 - SCHOOL. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.
 - SUPT. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.
 - SCHOOL. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.
 - SUPT. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.
 - SCHOOL. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.
 - SUPT. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.
- III. SINGING.
- IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.
- V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.
- VI. SCRIPTURE LESSON.
- VII. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE.

- I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
- II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
- III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, AND OUTLINE by the school in concert.
- IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.]
- VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings].

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
 - SUPT. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?
 - SCHOOL. Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
 - SUPT. He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.
- III. DISMISSION.



1. HEBRON. THE LARGE STRUCTURE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PICTURE OF HEBRON IS THE MOSQUE ERRECTED OVER THE REMAINS OF ABRAHAM, SARAH, ISAAC, AND OTHERS. 2. THE TOWER OF DAVID, MOUNT ZION. 3. THE TOMB OF DAVID.



THIRD QUARTER.

LINKS CONNECTING WITH THE LESSONS OF 1895.

Our last lesson from the Old Testament, December 15, 1895, told the story of Jonathan's loving leave-taking of David (1 Sam. 20. 32-42, about B. C. 1062). That was the turning point in David's career. For six years thereafter he was an outlaw. The leading events of these six years were: 1. While at Naioth (site unknown) King Saul in frenzy tries to kill his son Jonathan; David at Nod (probably the modern *Shafet*) receives sacred bread and Goliath's sword from Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam. 21. 1-9). 2. David escapes to Gath in Philistia (for politics in those days forced as strange and sudden somersaults as it sometimes does in ours), but, being received with sullen suspicion, feigns madness and flies back again to Judah (1 Sam. 21. 10-15). 3. He takes refuge in a cave near Adullam, a little border town near to Gath, only two miles south from the valley of Elah (*Wady es Suret*) where Goliath was slain, and only thirteen miles west from Bethlehem. Ancient wells and caves are here, one cave with ample accommodations for four hundred men, and "the modern Arabic name is identical with the Hebrew Adullam." (*H. A. Harper.*) Here four hundred adventurers, tired of Saul's rule, joined the young captain (1 Sam. 22. 1, 2). They lived by forays on the Philistines, who at this time overran Judah, and by levies made on neighboring towns and planters as the price of David's protection. In this company were his nephews, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, a young prophet named Gad, and a number of Canaanite warriors, such as Uriah, Zelek, and Ithmah. 4. The chronological value of the inscriptions of the Psalms is very slight, but it is interesting to note that according to these inscriptions Psalms 6, 7, 11, 59, 57, and 142 were all written after the outbreak of Saul's jealousy and before David's flight to Gath; Psalms 56 and 34 were written while he was there, and Psalm 63 after his flight to the wilderness of Judah. 5. When David's followers had increased to six hundred men (1 Sam. 23. 13) he marched around the lower end of the Dead Sea and left his aged parents at Mizpeh-across-Jordan (probably the modern *Suf*) in charge of the kindly king of Moab, who probably remembered that David's ancestress was a Moabitess. About this time David made the friendship of Nahash, king of Ammon also (2 Sam. 10. 2), and according to tradition wrote Psalm 27. 6. David returns to the "forest of Hareth," probably in the Hebron mountains, near Adullam, where he heard of Saul's revengeful slaughter of the priests at Nob, and took Abiathar the son of Ahimelech under his protection.



LESSON I.—JULY 5.

DAVID, KING OF JUDAH.—2 SAM. 2. 1-11.

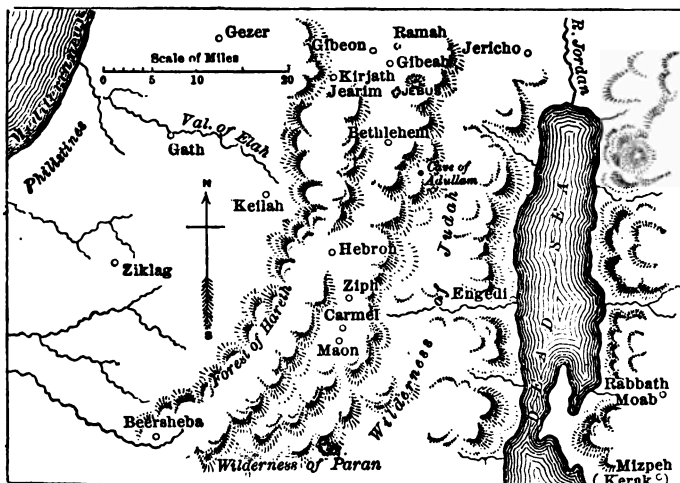
[*Read chapters 1 and 2.*]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice.—Psalm 97. 1.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

PLACES.—Hebron is about twenty miles south-southwest from Jerusalem, and about the same distance northeast from Beersheba. It is situated among the hills of Judea. *Captain Conder* thus describes its present appearance: "We passed through luxuriant vineyards carefully inclosed between stone walls. The grapes, mellowed by the autumn mists, were in full beauty; the rich, amber-green foliage covered the whole open valley; beyond were a stone town and a

fortress gleaming with a recent coating of whitewash, having a tall minaret above. A barren hill and a few gray olives rose behind. Such was our first view of Hebron, the ancient city,



which, as the Bible tells us, 'was built seven years before Zoan [or Memphis] in Egypt' (Num. 13. 22). It is a long, stone town on the western slope of a bare terraced hill, and extends along the valley; the main part reaches about seven hundred yards north and south. The

Sultan's Pool, a large, well-built reservoir, occupies part of the valley. West of the city is an open plain, surrounded by hills which are covered with olives." This was a place of great importance, both from old association and from its strategical strength, and was well suited to be the capital of the new kingdom about to be inaugurated.

LESSON HYMN.—

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm.
Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take: The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.—*William Cowper.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (June 29), David, King of Judah, 2 Sam. 2. 1-11. *Tuesday*, The first anointing, 1 Sam. 16. 1-13. *Wednesday* (July 1), The death of Saul, 2 Sam. 1. 1-12. *Thursday*, Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1. 17-27. *Friday*, Burial of Saul, 1 Sam. 31. 7-13. *Saturday*, A king's homage, Psalm 21. 1-7. *Sunday*, The Son of David, Mark 11. 1-11.

Authorized Version.

1 And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go

Revised Version.

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¹ Judg. 1. 1; 1 Sam. 28. 2, 4, 9; 30. 7, 8.

I. THE CHIEF AT HEBRON. VERSES 1-3.

1. **After this**—After the death of Saul and Jonathan. David's pathetic lament is recorded in the preceding chapter. **David inquired of the Lord**—It might seem at first glance strange that the nation did not unanimously call him to the throne; but unfortunately he was not any longer the favorite hero. He had been forced into apparent rebellion against the "anointed of the Lord," and his alliance with the heathen king Achish must have alienated from him his

Authorized Version.

up into any of the cities of Ju'dah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And Da'vid said,

Revised Version.

up into any of the cities of Ju'dah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And Da-

countrymen. His first need, then, was to regain his lost popularity. How should it be done? 1 Sam. 30, 26-31 shows his first step in this direction, taken about the time that the news came of the overthrow of Saul. The towns mentioned in that passage are all hamlets in the uplands of southern Judah, within twenty miles of each other, between Hebron and Ziklag. He had ruled his warriors so carefully while an outlaw that, on the whole, the feeling of Judah toward him was friendly; but he needed more than twenty square miles of friends if he would reach the throne. Not all the glory of his past history, the tender love shown him by the aged prophet Samuel, the presence with him of the prophet Gad and the high priest Abiathar, his great deeds in war, the noble army that he had organized and now led, nor his gifts as a bard, led to any popular action on his behalf. So he was *compelled*, in a sense, to inquire of the Lord. "His home at Ziklag was burned to the ground; was it worth while to rebuild it? Now that Saul was dead was it politic, was it right, to remain in the land of the Philistines? The slaughter at Gilboa had given these foes possession of a large tract of country; the north submitted to them without a blow, and many of the Israelite cities between the plain of Esdraelon and the river were destroyed by their inhabitants or occupied by the enemy. What the adherents of Saul might do was still unknown. Any hasty or indiscreet movement might provoke a civil war, and weaken the nation when it most needed prudence and undivided counsels."—*Deane*. **Shall I go up?**—David knew that he was to be king, but how to attain the throne he knew not. He had no unholy ambition, and in matters of so great responsibility he wished Jehovah to guide him."—*Terry*. "Going up" meant assuming royal authority. **Any of the cities of Judah**—It would be absurd to think of assuming royal authority in the northern part of the kingdom or on the eastern side of Jordan. Not only were the "cities of Judah" near at hand, but they were already more or less in sympathy with the young aspirant to the throne. The estrangement which was afterward so distinctly recognized between "Ephraim and Judah"—that is, the tribes that clustered around each of these prominent tribes—had already its beginnings. All the north pulled together and the south was a community by itself. The dividing line ran from east to west, a few miles north of Jerusalem. The west coast was still in the hands of the Philistines; east of the Dead Sea and in the lower part of the Jordan valley reigned the kings of Moab and Edom; and in the more northerly part, where the Israelites maintained possession of territory east of the Jordan, they were disposed to side with the northerly tribes rather than with the easterly. **The Lord said**—Just how David inquired and in just what manner the Lord answered we are not told. David probably summoned Abiathar, with the ephod, and in the presence of his captains applied to the Urim and Thummim. Precisely what these were no man knows. The words mean "lights" and "perfections." They were in the breastplate of the high priest, which breastplate was made of four rows of precious stones, three in each row, and set in a square of gold. It was fastened to the ephod, which, in its turn, may be best described as being two square pieces of beautiful cloth, one worn on the front and one on the back of the body, and fastened at the shoulders. The Urim, "lights," may have been the twelve stones in the breastplate on which the Thummim, or "perfections," were engraved. Or, as there was a pocket behind the breastplate, they may have been three precious stones cast into this pocket or pouch, one of which represented Yes, another No, and the third No answer; the one drawn out by the high priest would answer the question. Or, as *Züllig* and *Trench* suppose, they may have been a diamond with some engraving upon it, indicating the name of the Deity. **Go up**—God's answers to prayer are not all of them immediately intelligible, as was this, but his providence is as minute and personal to-day as it was in David's time, and "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." David's decision, guided by God, was now to promptly claim the monarchy.

Authorized Version.
Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto
Hebron.

Revised Version.
vid said, Whither shall I go up? And he

21 Sam. 30. 31; ver. 11; chap. 5. 1, 3; 1 Kings 2. 11.

Whither shall I go up—As the principle of casting the lot was underneath most antique modes of deciding questions beyond the range of ordinary human wisdom, it is probable that David selected perhaps three of the most eligible places to be his capital city, and then “drew,” the answer being **Hebron**. This city is described at length in the **BACKGROUND** of this lesson. It is one of the most ancient cities of the world, and at the present time is as prosperous relatively as the rest of Palestine. It is one of the most bigoted cities in Palestine,



POOL IN HEBRON.

no Christian being permitted to reside within its limits, the Western traveler being subjected to insult wherever he goes. There is no wall about the city, and it does not ravel off in ragged suburbs, as most of our American towns do, but the streets and squares end plumb with each last house, and the city itself is built solidly, giving it a quaint and unique appearance. A fine French road, thoroughly macadamized, leads from Hebron to Jerusalem.

ONE CANNOT WELL DISTINGUISH David's traits as king from his traits as candidate for the crown. From our earliest glimpse of him until he sinks in feebleness on the bed of death we see: 1. A vivid sense of God's presence. The Lord was his chief counselor, consulted first in every emergency. 2. Personal prowess, quite chivalrous in its character. David's adventures with Jonathan, Abigail, Saul in the cave, etc., resemble the adventures of some peerless mediæval knight far more than the doings of an Eastern despot. 3. Promptitude in all his movements. Napoleon could hardly have outdone him in celerity. 4. A patience that was sublime and that has been rarely matched in ancient or modern history. One example of many is his quiet waiting for the disintegration of the northern kingdom. He was himself “the Lord's anointed,” and he well knew all the political and military advantages arising from this fact. After Saul's death he might have swept everything before him; but he never made an unnecessary stroke. 5. Headlong affection. He loved tremendously. 6. The heart and fancy of a poet. He led his troops in a charge one day and wrote a hymn the next; and, so far as we can date the Psalms, those of his advanced age are as sweet and fresh as those of his youth. 7. The cool head and steady nerve of a statesman. His purpose was of steel. His directions to his son and successor concerning the lives of men who had threatened the harmony of the kingdom might have been given by a Richelieu or a Mazarin. 8. This rich and varied life was keyed to one note, *loy-*

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
2 So Da'vid went up thither, and his ^s two	2 said, Unto He'bron. So Da'vid went up
^s 1 Sam. 30. 5.	

alty to God. This loyalty was so intense that his cause and God's cause became identical, and he could not readily distinguish between the Lord's enemies and his own. This trait goes far in explaining the deprecatory psalms; and, in spite of all his sins and blunders, must impress every impartial reader as the leading characteristic of King David.

INQUIRING OF GOD. Many Christians add to themselves much unnecessary trouble by failing to inquire concerning the will of God. He has promised to direct our paths, and there is no special doubt or difficulty or perplexity through which we may not receive guidance from above. We receive directions from God in six different ways: 1. The commands of superiors. For children at home the will of their parents is the will of God. For employees of all grades the commands of their employers, always supposing that what is enjoined is not clearly sinful. 2. Reason and conscience will often, if we allow them free speech, give a response which at once commends itself as a divine reply. If one course be morally right, the other morally wrong, one in manifest guidance with the laws of Christ, the other in plain opposition to them, there is no room for further question. 3. The counsels of wise and good men. Consulting them our course may often become clear, yet we may not submit blindly to them. 4. Holy Scripture is to be consulted, not at all by the superstitious turning over its pages, but by careful study of its revelations and precepts. From the Proverbs, the gospels, and the epistles especially a Christian may obtain most of the instruction of the will of God that he will require. 5. The providence of God. Often we are prompted by our best desires to courses which God never gives us the ability and opportunity to pursue. 6. Everywhere and always we may depend on direct divine guidance. Psalm 25. 4 furnishes a prayer we should all offer. By direct influence on the minds and hearts of those who seek him God becomes their guide; the Spirit seeks those who are willing to be led by him. But we must be careful not to make up our minds before we inquire of God, and never to make anything a matter of prayer simply in order that we may obtain a feeling of divine approval of the course chosen.

DIVINE GUIDANCE. 1. Urgently needed by us quite as much as by David; but we never feel our need of it so much as when we experience past failures. 2. Should be diligently sought by us as well as by him (Psalm 34. 4). 3. Is always graciously given (Psalm 32. 8; 37. 23; 48. 14; Isa. 30. 21; 42. 16; Prov. 3. 6). 4. Should be faithfully followed by us as by him, with humble obedience; with entire dependence; without hesitation or delay; with cheerfulness, zeal, and energy. 5. Is gradually confirmed in the experience of him who obeys (John 7. 17; Hosea 6. 3). 6. Is widely beneficial, contributing to the good of all who share our perplexity and distress. 7. Always terminates in glory (Prov. 3. 35).

2. David went up—We are to think of his journey as a march of an army, or, rather, the migration of a large company of guerillas. There were few household effects and few women and children in the company; it was made up of bronzed youths inured to hardship, among whom rank and fame were secured by daring deeds rather than by anything comparable to modern military skill. They were strong enough to go into any town and establish themselves as the ruling force in that town, since they had proved strong enough to maintain their dominance outside of town and fortification, which was a desperate thing to attempt to do in those days. Now the country was in anarchy; there was no king. **His two wives**—David was still a young man, probably about thirty years of age, but his matrimonial experiences had already been varied and manifold. When Goliath of Gath confronted the armies of Israel Saul had promised that the man who killed him should be enriched with great riches and be made son-in-law of the king; and in apparent fulfillment of this promise, when David had killed Goliath, he promised to him his eldest daughter, Merab. But before the marriage Merab's younger sister, Michal,

Authorized Version.

wives also, A-hin'o-am the Jez're-el-i-tess, and Ab'i-gail Na'bal's wife the Car'mel-ite.

Revised Version.

thither, and his two wives also, A-hin'o-am the Jez're-el-i-tess, and Ab'i-gail the wife

had displayed her attachment for David, and Merab never became his wife. Saul gave Michal to David with malicious intent, "that she might be a snare to him." As a dowry the slaughterer of a hundred Philistines was asked. David brought evidences of the death of two hundred,

and was married to Michal. Soon after this she saved David from the assassin whom her jealous father had sent to take his life. When the rupture between Saul and David had become open and incurable Michal was given to another man, Phalti of Gallim (1 Sam. 25. 44), and she was not restored to David till some years after this. During David's wandering life, about B. C. 1060, a young woman of the town of Jezreel was married to him (1 Sam. 25. 43); and a little later he married the beautiful widow of Nabal, a wealthy owner of goats and sheep in Carmel. David had protected Nabal, and, being rewarded by contempt and scorn, his wrath was



A STREET IN HEBRON.

aroused, and he was about to inflict bloody vengeance upon him when the beautiful Abigail supplied him and his followers with provisions and appeased his anger. Ten days after this Nabal died, and David sent for Abigail and made her his wife. By her he had a son who was called Chileab (2 Sam. 3. 8; 1 Chron. 3. 1). A Jezreelitess was a native of Jezreel, a little

Authorized Version.

3 And ⁴his men that *were* with him did Da'vid bring up, every man with his household : and they dwelt in the cities of He'bron.

4 ⁵And the men of Ju'dah came, and there they anointed Da'vid king over the house of Ju'dah. And they told Da'vid, saying, *That* ⁶the men of Ja'besh-gil'e-ad *were* they that buried Saul.

Revised Version.

3 of Na'bal the Car'mel-ite. And his men that were with him did Da'vid bring up, every man with his household : and they dwelt in the cities of He'bron. And the men of Ju'dah came, and there they anointed Da'vid king over the house of Ju'dah.

And they told Da'vid, saying, The men of Ja'besh-gil'e-ad were they that buried

⁴ 1 Sam. 27. 2, 3; 30. 1; 1 Chron. 12. 1.—⁵ Ver. 11; chap. 5. 5.

—⁶ 1 Sam. 31. 11, 12.

town in Judah very near to the southern Carmel, of which we will presently speak. It is to be carefully distinguished from the great and splendid city in which Ahab built his ivory palace, and which was long the capital city of the Israelitish kingdom. A **Carmelite** is a resident of Carmel, a little town in the mountainous region of Judah (Josh. 15. 55), which, like the southern Jezreel, is to be carefully distinguished from the more famous Carmel, that mountain range which was the picturesque scene of so many of the deeds of Elijah and Elisha. These two women had had an adventurous career. They were taken by David to the court of Achish at Gath (1 Sam. 27. 3); were made captive when the Amalekites plundered Ziklag (1 Sam. 30. 5), but were presently rescued by David and his men (1 Sam. 30. 18). History contains few lives more romantic than that of Abigail, whom we watch as a hopeful Hebrew maiden; then, still young and beautiful, as the childless wife of the rich and surly Nabal; then as participator in the rough and ready life of the young hero of the nation as he fled in guerilla warfare from cave to cave throughout the "mountain of Judah;" then amid the barbaric splendor and voluptuous idolatry of Achish's capital; then in the wild confusion and fury of the midnight onset of the Amalekites, who flung herself and her sister wife as captives on some fleet camel or horse and sped southward over the rocks and sands; then during the second onset in the wilderness, when she woke to find herself again in the grasp of her hero husband; then the removal to Hebron, of which our lesson tells; and a little later the triumphal procession to Jerusalem, and a life of luxury amid the splendors of the most splendid court of the age. **Ahinoam**, of whom less is said, was equally faithful, and shared most of these perils and triumphs.

3. **His men that were with him**—What a set of madcap adventurers they were is seen from Second Samuel and First Chronicles. **Every man with his household**—Some of them had wealth, and could easily, in oriental fashion, purchase for themselves wives from the wealthy homes in Judah, for the mountain district of Judah always favored David. Others, doubtless, had taken to themselves beautiful captives from the heathen towns south and west which they so often raided and sacked. **The cities of Hebron**—The tiny towns which surrounded it and which depended upon it.

II. THE KING OF JUDAH. VERSES 4-7.

4. **The men of Judah**—The division of sympathy between Judah and Israel was noticeable in very early days, even before the tribes reached Palestine, and it was continued and emphasized in many ways through the centuries. The "men" of Judah were the active politicians, the elders, the representatives of leading families, the heads of clans, the autocrats, each of whom held over a small part of the territory peculiar prerogatives which were rooted in power rather than in constitutional right. **Anointed David king**—Samuel had done so prophetically. This was a ceremony akin to the more modern ceremony of coronation. **Over the house of Judah**—This was a tribal secession, and it would seem at first to have been of doubtful wisdom, but verse 1 seems to state that it was by direct divine guidance, and the outcome was so favorable to the interests of David as to fully justify this opinion. Judah was now, as it became again after Solomon's downfall, a separate kingdom. The years during which Israel and Judah were unified as a kingdom were, counted together, about 112. **They told David**—The courtiers.

Authorized Version.

5 And Da'vid sent messengers unto the men of Ja'bes-gil'e-ad, and said unto them, 'Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now ^othe Lord show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and ^abe ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Ju'dah have anointed me king over them.

Revised Version.

5 Saul. And Da'vid sent messengers unto the men of Ja'bes-gil'e-ad, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this

7 thing. Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant: for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Ju'dah have anointed me king over them.

^o Ruth 2. 20; 2. 16; Psalm 118. 18.—^a 2 Tim. 1. 16, 18.—
^a Heb. be ye the sons of valor.

Jabesh-gilead was the town of Jabesh in the territory of Gilead, and Gilead was in its widest sense the territory in which resided the half tribe of Manasseh and the tribes of Gad and Reuben. This was the chief city of Gilead, and had been bravely defended by Saul against Nahash the Ammonite.

THE MEN OF JABESH-GILEAD DISPLAYED, 1. Gratitude toward their benefactor, whose kindness they returned with kindness. 2. Loyalty toward their king, whose faithfulness they returned with faithfulness. 3. Reverence toward their God.

THE MEN OF JUDAH SHOWED, 1. An exalted estimate of David's personal worth. 2. Loyal acceptance of his divine appointment; they displayed the thoroughly theocratic spirit. 3. Voluntary submission to his royal authority; he was to them a minister of God. 4. Unbounded confidence in his beneficent rule.

5. David sent messengers—Although king of Judah only, David aspired to the control

of the whole nation. He could not tell just how popular feeling might sway to and fro, and as Saul was peculiarly beloved in Jabesh-gilead the sending of such a message as this to the warriors of that city was eminently politic. Blessed be ye of the Lord—Oriental courtesy. This kindness unto your lord—The burial of a person was of immeasurably more importance in those days than it is at present. Saul's kingdom seems to have amounted to little more than a suzerainty over a lot of smaller "lords," a kind of feudal monarchy.

SAY KIND THINGS. To cherish kind feelings is not enough; we should express them. Their expression is good for ourselves and good



ANCIENT WEAPONS OF WAR.

for others; it increases noble deeds, it promotes high happiness, it binds men together in the best bonds; and if this be so, how much more important it is to express our gratitude to God!

7. Now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant—There was need of such advice as this. The country was trembling and swaying on the very edge of ruin. Your master Saul is dead—This was meant to imply that though they might again see a kingdom, the dynasty was no more. The house of Judah have anointed me king—He makes no such claim to divine selection as we might expect to be put forward by the young hero who had been

Authorized Version.

8 But ^aAb'ner the son of Ner, captain of ^bSaul's host, took ^cIsh-bo'sheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Ma-ha-na'im;

Revised Version.

8 Now Ab'ner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, had taken ¹Ish-bo'sheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Ma-

^a 1 Sam. 14. 50.—^b Heb. *the host which was Saul's*.—^c Or, *Eshbaal*, 1 Chron 8. 33; 9. 39.

¹ In 1 Chron. 8. 33; 9. 39, *Eshbaal*.

appointed and anointed by Samuel, the holy prophet of all Israel. This last sentence of his message means, What the house of Judah has done it would be well for all Israel to do. It is a bid for the loyal adherence of the warriors of Jabesh-gilead.

MIXED MOTIVES. David intended by this message not only to give the brave men of Jabesh-gilead their due, but also to win their favor toward himself. Such men once won



RUINS OF JERASH—GENERALLY IDENTIFIED WITH MAHANAIM.

would be loyal subjects. The course he took was shrewd and thoroughly right: 1. We should not hesitate to do right because we see that it will also be beneficial to ourselves. God promises special blessings to those who serve him and to those who serve their fellow-men. 2. We may even in some cases aim to do good to ourselves, by doing what is right, only we must place first that which is first ("Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness") or our good deeds will cease to be good and become only another form of selfishness. Where motives are mixed we need carefully to guard ourselves, lest the lower motives predominate. 3. We should be glad of opportunities to show pure, disinterested kindness; we thus most closely resemble our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. We ought not without clearest evidence to suspect others of selfish motives.

III. THE KING OF ISRAEL. VERSES 8-11.

8. **Abner the son of Ner**—This Abner was uncle to King Saul, brother of Kish, Saul's father. He was a warrior of distinction. All we know concerning Ner is that he was the son of Jehiel (1 Chron. 9. 35, 36) and father of Kish and Abner. **Captain of Saul's host**—Saul was the founder of the standing army of Israel, and Abner, as commander in chief, must have been the most influential of all his subjects (1 Sam. 14. 51; 17. 57; 26. 5-14). **Took Ish-bosheth**—Ishbosheth was the youngest of Saul's sons. He does not seem to have inherited his father's strong character, for, however erratic and rebellious Saul became in his later life, his kingly qualities are unquestioned. Ishbosheth's life made hardly any impression. During the two years of his reign the wars and negotiations with David were entirely carried on by Abner. **Brought him over to Mahanaim**—This is, took him across the Jordan to its eastern

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
9 And made him king over Gil'e-ad, and over the Ash'ur-ites, and over Jez're-el, and	9 ha-na'im; and he made him king over Gil'e-ad, and over the ² Ash'ur-ites, and over

² The Vulgate and Syriac have, *Geshurites*.

side. Mahanaim became distinguished when Jacob there met the angels of God (Gen. 32. 1, 2); it is mentioned in the records of the conquest (Josh. 13. 26, 30); it fell to Gad (Josh. 21. 38, 39), and became afterward a Levitical town. At this time it was very evidently a place of mark. Some years afterward David himself took refuge there when driven out of his western kingdom by Absalom (2 Sam. 17. 24; 1 Kings 2. 8). It became the seat of Solomon's commissariat officers (1 Kings 4. 14). It is now generally, though not certainly, identified with a place called Mahneh, a village on the east of Jordan.

9. King over Gilead—There are abundant evidences that Israel in the early days of the kingdom was practically a grouping of principalities, any three or four of which might, united together, form a petty kingdom. The "judges" each in turn ruled over such a little grouping, and Saul in his youthful vigor first of all secured dominance over the territory adjoining his father's plantation, and then, little by little, induced the people of other neighborhoods to become his subjects. David, in his message to the men of Jabesh-gilead, took precisely this policy, and now Abner, on behalf of Ishbosheth, similarly proposes to annex under his rule all the nation, a little at a time. **Gilead**—Sometimes called Mount Gilead, as in Gen. 31. 25, and sometimes the land of Gilead, as in Num. 32. 1, is the hard mountain region east of the Jordan, lying between Bashan and Moab. From its rocky surface there loom up into the east Pisgah, Abarim, and Peor, to a height of two or three thousand feet, and an apparent height much greater if looked upon from the west, because of the deep depression of the Jordan valley. It was the home of Gad and part of Manasseh, and was in the main a pasture land. **The Ashurites**—A phrase taken by some of the old interpreters as meaning the Geshurites, but it is probable that it refers to the inhabitants of the country west of the Jordan and north of Jezreel. The tribe of Ashur was descended from the eighth son of Jacob, whose mother was Zilpah, Leah's slave girl. The general position of the tribe was on the seashore from Carmel northward, with Manasseh on the south, Zebulun and Issachar on the southeast, and Naphtali on the northeast. They possessed the maritime portion of the rich plain of Esdraelon for a distance of eight or ten miles from the shore. **Jezreel**—Not at all the little town where Ahinoam, the wife of David, was born—it, as we have seen, crowns a rocky hill-top of Judea—but a very important city in the heart of that part of the country which later became the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and which was divided in our Lord's day into Galilee, Samaria, and Perea. It is probable that the phrase here refers rather to the plain in which the city stood than to the city itself, which did not secure great historical importance until the reign of Ahab (B. C. 918-897). The plain of Esdraelon is about fifteen miles long; on its northern side it would hardly measure more than twelve miles in length, while the southern side is as great as eighteen. This fertile and beautiful valley became one of the celebrated battlefields of the world. This is the place where Gideon triumphed, and where only a few months before the date of this lesson Saul and Jonathan were overthrown. It is at present as wonderfully desolate as in the time of David and Ishbosheth it was wonderfully fruitful. **Ephraim** was one of the two tribes descended from Jacob's son Joseph. The boundary of the tribal inheritance extended from the Jordan on the east, opposite Jericho, to the Mediterranean on the west, probably about Joppa. The territory was one of great richness and great security. Even under Joshua Ephraim became the center of a progressive life which differed very much from that of Judah. Their traditions and prejudices pulled apart, and all through the reigns of David and Solomon, though both were loyal, there was what might almost be called in American phraseology the "States, rights" feeling in Ephraim. Perhaps the great cities which grew up in the neighborhood of Jezreel and Samaria contrasted in sentiment with Jeru-

Authorized Version.
over E'phra-im, and over Ben'ja-min, and over all Is'ra-el.

10 Ish-bo'sheth Saul's son *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Is'ra-el, and reigned two years. But the house of Ju'dah followed Da'vid.

11 And ¹⁰the ^atime that Da'vid was king in He'bron over the house of Ju'dah was seven years and six months.

Revised Version.
Jez're-el, and over E'phra-im, and over

10 Ben'ja-min, and over all Is'ra-el. (Ish-bo'sheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Is'ra-el, and he reigned two years.) But the house of Ju'dah followed Da'vid. And the time that Da'vid was king in He'bron over the house of Ju'dah was seven years and six months.

¹⁰ Chap. 5. 5; 1 Kings 2. 11. —^a Heb. number of days.

salem and Hebron very much as Charleston and Richmond contrasted with Boston and Philadelphia before the war. Benjamin would naturally in any division of the nation take sides with the descendant of the Benjamite king. Its territory was a rough parallelogram of about



JEZREEL.

twenty-six miles in length by twelve in breadth, lying between Ephraim, the Jordan, Judah, and Dan. The tribe was most warlike. It does not seem ever to have been very numerous. **Over all Israel**—This phrase is a sort of review of what has been said before. The different regions specified as Gilead, the land of the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin, taken together, were the region which afterward became the site of the kingdom of Israel.

10. Ishbosheth . . . reigned two years—"The next verse informs us that David reigned in Hebron over Judah seven years and six months, and therefore we must naturally conclude that for five years and six months the other tribes of Israel were without an acknowledged king. It is altogether gratuitous to assume, as some critics have done, that Ishbosheth reigned all the time that David reigned in Hebron. It is probable, however, that David was king in Hebron some time before Ishbosheth began to reign. David seems to have been anointed very soon after Saul's death, but it must have taken Abner some time to gather up the scattered army and recover from the defeat and losses of Gilboa sufficiently to attend to the inauguration of Ishbosheth. So it is likely that David reigned in Hebron a year or more before the son of Saul was anointed at Mahanaim. Then followed two years of strife and bickering between the two governments, which was of sufficient length to be called 'long war' (2 Sam. 3. 1). And after both Abner and Ishbosheth had been vilely assassinated it is but natural to suppose that the northern tribes would wait some years to observe the manner of David's government before they all came together to acknowledge and anoint him king."—*Terry*.

Illustration 206. An iron church which was wanted in West Africa was ordered from England, and duly shipped for its destination at Liverpool. It was, of course, sent in detached pieces, to be put together after it arrived, according to the plan of the designer. Until this was done it could not serve the purpose for which it was intended. Now, imagine that on its arrival the purchasers had attempted to put it together after their own fancy, without regard to the plan of the maker, what utter confusion would have followed! The different parts, put in the wrong places, would not have fitted one into the other. There would have been no beauty, no harmony, no coherence, and the structure would have failed to answer to its design. Not altogether dissimilar was the confusion which existed in the land of Israel during the first seven years that succeeded the death of Saul. There was one king reigning over the tribe of Judah at Hebron, and another over the remaining tribes at Mahanaim. Compare 2 Sam. 2. 8-29. There was constant warfare between the followers of the one and the other, and the period was marked by disorder, bloodshed, and treachery. As a divided nation Israel could offer no bold front to the enemies around, and was powerless to attain the position God had intended it to occupy.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

From the life of Christ the King we turn back a thousand years to the life of Christ's ancestor according to the flesh, David the king, who stands as a prophetic picture of his greater Son. We see a youth who, in the face of the greatest obstacles and the most bitter opposition, rose from the condition of a shepherd to that of a king; who on his accession found Israel a broken, dissevered, helpless people, and lifted it to an imperial state, ruling over all the lands between the Euphrates and the Nile. A close study of this lesson will reveal most of **The Elements of Character that Made David Great.**

I. His Communion with God. Verse 1. This was the deepest secret of David's success. He lived in communion with the Infinite, talked with God and learned God's will. Herein lay also the secret of his psalms, which are a mirror of spiritual experience. David talked with God, and received from God knowledge of his will. See evidences of this all through the early part of his career.

II. His Obedience to God. Verses 2, 3. He not only sought out God's will, but also followed it. Herein David was in contrast with Saul, whose decline dates from the hour when he rejected God and followed his own impulses. David was "the man after God's heart," not altogether because of his personal character (though that was far above the moral standards of his age), but mainly because he sought to be a theocratic king, that is, reigning as God's servant and subject to God's will as interpreted by inspired prophets.

III. His Promptness in Action. Verses 2-4. David never delayed, but acted at just the right time. Before the rival throne had been set up at Mahanaim David's had been established at Hebron. This energetic, immediate action was a trait of his character. He had slain the giant in the valley of Elah by striking quickly. So Alexander said that "he conquered the world by not delaying." So Napoleon won his victories "by getting fifteen minutes ahead of the enemy."

IV. His Sympathy and Generosity. Verses 5-7. David always admired and honored a noble action. He possessed that spirit of sympathy which kept him in touch with the people. He played upon the hearts of men as skillfully as on the strings of his harp. Note instances of this in 1 Sam. 18. 14-16; 24. 4-7; 26. 8-11; 1 Chron. 11. 17-19. He knew well that his dynasty must have a deeper foundation than mere personal popularity, and he constantly sought to surround his throne by men of noble character. Besides, his nobility of nature won the loyal devotion of his followers.

THE WAY OF BLESSING

FOR

GOD'S CHOSEN ONES.

FIND OUT
FOLLOW

THE WILL OF THE LORD.

DAVID | HAVE | | DAVID | HAVE |
INQUIRED. | | OBEYED.

"TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE."

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS I AND II.

1. A mortal skirmish between twelve of Abner's men and twelve of Joab's men results in a great battle at Gibeon, the death of Asahel, and the rout of Abner's army; results also in a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David (2 Sam. 2. 12-3. 1), B. C. 1053.
 2. Abner's anger at Ishbosheth's suspicions results in his revolt to David (2 Sam. 3. 6-21).
 3. Joab kills Abner in revenge for the death of Asahel (2 Sam. 3. 22-39). 4. Ishbosheth murdered by two of his soldiers, and they are executed by David (2 Sam. 4. 1-12), B. C. 1048.



LESSON II.—JULY 12.

DAVID, KING OVER ALL ISRAEL.—2 SAM. 5. 1-12.

[Read chapter 3. 1 to chapter 5. 25.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.—2 Sam. 5. 10.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

IN CONNECTION WITH THIS LESSON it is fitting: 1. To study the exaltation and power of David as a remarkable character in history. 2. To recognize the hand of God in the removal of kings and in the setting up of kings. 3. To observe that all righteous governments show deference to the consent and choice of the governed. 4. To remember how the wise location of the seat of government tends to ennoble and consolidate a nation or people. 5. To notice how enterprising movements at home and prudent foreign relations build up a kingdom. 6. To appreciate the beauty of deep and intelligent piety in the ruler of a great nation.

TIME.—B. C. 1048.

PLACES.—Hebron; Jerusalem, especially Zion and Millo.

THE UNITED KINGDOM.—After Saul's death the brave and capable Abner had to a certain extent reclaimed from the Philistines the country called "Israel," as distinguished from "Judah," and so, after a year or two of fighting, had established Saul's fourth son, the feeble Ishbosheth, as king over the ten tribes. Ish-baal was his real name, but when "baal" (lord) was identified with idolatry "bosheth" (shame) was substituted. He reigned about two years, and later David united the whole country under his rule. It is important to remember that what we are accustomed to regard as the disruption was only the resolution of elements which had never very thoroughly combined. The line of cleavage between Judah and Israel began to show itself in the anarchy of the judges' period, when the powerful tribes of Ephraim and Judah were constantly struggling for the leadership. The common danger from without united them under strong rulers like Saul, David, and Solomon, but in every civil disturbance North and South took different sides, and as soon as ever the foolish and headstrong Rehoboam tried to play the despot the artificial union was dissolved. Thus the Jewish community never had any stable bond of external unity any more than the Christian. And both Old and New covenant Scriptures show us that, while it is indeed "good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity," it is a prospect which is only ideal in this world.

LESSON HYMN.—

Blest are the sons of peace, Whose hearts and hopes are one;
 Whose kind designs to serve and please Through all their actions run.
 Blest is the pious house Where zeal and friendship meet:
 Their songs of praise, their mingled vows, Make their communion sweet.
 Thus on the heavenly hills The saints are blest above,
 Where joy like morning dew distills, And all the air is love.—Isaac Watts.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (July 6), David, King over All Israel, 2 Sam. 5. 1-12. *Tuesday*, The people's hero, 1 Sam. 18. 5-16. *Wednesday*, Seeking divine guidance, 2 Sam. 5. 17-25. *Thursday*, David's helpers, 1 Chron. 12. 16-22. *Friday*, Israel's king, 1 Chron. 12. 23-38. *Saturday*, Promises for David, Psalm 89. 19-29. *Sunday*, The Lord our righteousness, Jer. 23. 1-8.

Authorized Version.

1 Then ¹came all the tribes of Is'ra-el to Da'vid unto He'bron, and spake, saying, Behold, ²we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.

2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, ³thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Is'ra-el: and the LORD said to

Revised Version.

1 Then came all the tribes of Is'ra-el to Da'vid unto He'bron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Is'ra-el: and the LORD said to thee,

¹ 1 Chron. 11. 1; 12. 22.—² Gen. 29. 14.—³ 1 Sam. 18. 13.

I. THE KING CHOSEN. VERSES 1-5.

1. **Then**—Probably not long after the deaths of Abner and Ishbosheth. The northern tribes had now no leader strong enough to protect them against the Philistines, and they came to the man whose genius and success had marked him out as designed for rule. So did circumstances combine to promote the divine choice. **Came all the tribes**—So we read in 1 Sam. 8. 4 that "all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together" unto Ramah to ask for a king. The "elders" represented the whole people, and in the popular language what they did was the act of the whole nation; but from 1 Chron. 12. 22-40 it would appear that not only the elders and rulers, but the entire body of warriors, assembled. **To David**—He had been chosen king of Judah on the death of Saul, and now, seven years afterward, was universally recognized as the only man fit to unite all the tribes. **Hebron**—One of the oldest cities of Canaan, situated in the mountain region of Judah, some twenty miles to the south of Jerusalem. Here was the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham purchased for a tomb, and which is to-day covered with a mosque and most carefully guarded. David may have felt a pardonable pride in reigning seven years in a city so sacred in the history of his nation. **We are**—Compare Gen. 29. 14; Judg. 9. 2. The words mark the regrets with which the men of Israel begin to realize that they have treated as an alien this hero of Judah. **Was not Judah their brother and David their heaven-sent king?** **Thy bone**—This was their first plea, the common relationship among all the children of Israel, a reason why the tribes should be no longer divided. So may we say to great David's greater Son who shares our humanity (Eph. 5. 30). All God's people are one kindred, and should love each other. They becomingly recognize their ancestral affinity as being descendants of the great patriarchs whose bones reposed in Hebron.

2. **In time past**—Literally, "yesterday and the day before." **When Saul was king**—A respectful allusion to the memory of the late monarch. **Thou wast he that leddest**—Even during Saul's reign David was the true hero who delivered Israel, led its armies, and showed capacity for rule. David, and not Saul, had performed the part for which Saul was especially chosen as king (1 Sam. 8. 20). Compare 1 Sam. 18. 5, 18, 27. As captain in Saul's army he had probably wrought many celebrated feats of military prowess aside from the killing of Goliath. **The Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed**—We do not find a record of this prophecy elsewhere, but it is evident from this verse and chapters 3, 9, 18, and 1 Sam. 25. 30, and other similar intimations, that the word of divine prophecy to this effect had gone forth in Israel and was familiar to the people. **Thou shalt feed**—Literally, "Thou shalt shepherd;" an allusion to David's early employment. From a shepherd of the flock he became the shepherd of the people. See here a foretoken of Him who calls himself the Good Shepherd. "This conception of the functions of a patriarchal ruler, so familiar to readers of *Homer*, has an exqui-

Authorized Version.

thee, 'Thou shalt feed my people Is'ra-el, and thou shalt be a captain over Is'ra-el.

3 'So all the elders of Is'ra-el came to the king to He'bron; and king Da'vid made a league with them in He'bron 'before the LORD: and they anointed Da'vid king over Is'ra-el.

Revised Version.

Thou shalt feed my people Is'ra-el, and thou shalt be 'prince over Is'ra-el. So all the elders of Is'ra-el came to the king to He'bron; and king Da'vid made a covenant with them in He'bron before the LORD: and they anointed Da'vid king over Is'ra-el.

* 1 Sam. 16. 1, 12; Psalm 78. 71; see chap. 7. 9.—* 1 Chron. 11. 3.—* 2 Kings 11. 17.—† Judg. 11. 11; 1 Sam. 23. 16.

1 Or, leader.

site appropriateness when applied to David. The title rises to its highest possibilities when the inspired representative of the favored people could realize, 'Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.'—*Moulton*. **Feed . . . be a captain**—Two images, suggestive of what a great and good king ought to be: a shepherd of the people and a commander of their hosts. "Three excellent reasons are thus given for David's election: 1. Kinship; 2. Military ability; 3. The word of prophecy"—reasons which are expanded in the next paragraph.

"NOTICE THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT which accompanies the recognition of the rightful king. It is threefold: 1. 'We are thy bone and thy flesh.' They had treated David before as an alien, with whom they had nothing to do. Now at length they remember that he is their kinsman, their brother. And they put the fact forward as their claim upon him. 2. 'Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.' They at length call to mind what he had done for them even while they were yet subject to another; the victory over Goliath, and the subsequent occasions on which he had overcome their enemies. 3. 'The Lord said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.' The recognition seems a tardy one. Had they only acted on it before they would have escaped these seven troublous years. But David does not reprove them for that. He is ready to take his place as monarch of all Israel, not for his own sake, but for the people's. See verse 12. Christ is our near Kinsman. Some hearts partially recognize this truth without going any further. But he not only took on him our nature, and was 'in all things made like unto his brethren;' he took up our cause as lost sinners, and won the victory over Satan and death and hell for us. And he must be acknowledged as sole and all-sufficient Redeemer. The soul that recognizes him truly as such will not stop there, but will receive him as divinely ordained Lord and King."—*Stock*.

3. **All the elders**—Compare "all the tribes" (verse 1). **Of Israel**—While all the warriors were present the negotiation was made through the recognized heads of the tribes. **Made a league**—Literally, "cut a covenant;" he entered into a solemn compact with the general assembly. "It is said, in 1 Sam. 10. 25, that Samuel wrote down 'the manner of the kingdom;' from which we infer that the king was expected to be governed by certain principles and laws. Hence the government was a constitutional, rather than an absolute, monarchy. The revolt of the Ten Tribes was occasioned by a refusal of Rehoboam to make concession to certain demands of the people (1 Kings 12. 3). Hence we may suppose that the league which David made with the elders of Israel stipulated rights and powers for both parties."—*Terry*. The kingdom of Israel was a limited monarchy, in which king and people were bound to certain conditions, as had been already shown when Saul became king, and was now reaffirmed by both David and the elders. Some of these conditions were that Jehovah was to be recognized as the supreme Lord, no idolatry was to be allowed, the law of Moses was to be observed, and the people's rights respected. **Before the Lord**—This may indicate that the ark was brought to sanction the service, but more likely that a vow was made in presence of the priests Abiathar and Zadok, as the representatives of God. Would that all legislators and rulers might recognize the presence of the Lord in their public acts! **They anointed David**—And so David received three anointings: first, by Samuel, in the midst of his brethren at Bethlehem (1 Sam.

Authorized Version.

4 Da'vid *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, ⁸ and he reigned forty years.

5 In He'bron he reigned over Ju'dah ⁹ seven years and six months: and in Je-ru'sa-lem he reigned thirty and three years over all Is'-ra-el and Ju'dah.

6 And the king and his men went ¹⁰ to Je-ru'sa-lem unto ¹¹ the Jeb'u-sites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto Da'vid, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: ^a thinking, Da'vid cannot come in hither.

Revised Version.

4 Da'vid was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty 5 years. In He'bron he reigned over Ju'dah seven years and six months: and

in Je-ru'sa-lem he reigned thirty and three years over all Is'-ra-el and Ju'dah.

6 ² And the king and his men went to Je-ru'sa-lem against the Jeb'u-sites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto Da'vid, saying, ³ Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, Da'vid cannot come

⁸ 1 Chron. 26. 31; 29. 27.—⁹ Chap. 2. 11; 1 Chron. 3. 4.—¹⁰ Judg. 1. 31.—¹¹ Josh. 15. 63; Judg. 1. 8; 19. 11, 12.—^a Or, saying, David shall not, etc.

² See 1 Chron. 11. 4-9.—³ Or, Thou shalt not come in hither, but the blind and the lame shall turn thee away.

16. 13); second, by the men of Judah at Hebron (chap. 2. 4); and now by the elders of all Israel. This was done in the name of all the twelve tribes, and accompanied with a general festival (1 Chron. 12. 38-40). The Chronicler's account (12. 28-40) should be studied for a more detailed picture of the movement.

4, 5. Thirty years old—The prime of mature manhood. At this age the priests were set apart for their duties (Num. 4. 3). The next verse shows that David was over thirty-seven years of age when he became king of all Israel. Joseph and Samuel, in the Old Testament, the Baptist, Jesus himself, and probably Paul, in the New Testament, began their life work about the age of thirty. **Forty years**—Including his reign over Judah, apart from Israel. **Over Judah**—There is some reason to suppose that he was during part of this time in friendship with, perhaps in subordination to, the Philistines, as the rulers of the land. **In Jerusalem**—Here named as the capital by anticipation, as it was soon taken by David.

II. THE CAPITAL WON. VERSES 6-9.

6. The king—Now entitled to the name, as ruler over all the tribes. **His men**—The army of Israel, part of which consisted of David's tried adherents, who had followed him in his exile; part, of those who had recently given him their allegiance. **To Jerusalem**—Then called Jebus, or Jebus-salem, and a Jebusite fortress. His purpose was to signalize his accession by a fitting achievement, to make himself master of his kingdom, to unite the tribes by a central capital, and to establish a new religious and military headquarters. Previous notices of Jerusalem may be found in Josh. 15. 63; 18. 28; and Judg. 1. 8, 21 (not in Gen. 14. 18). David's acuteness in fixing upon this site was abundantly justified by history. The fact that the aboriginal **Jebusites** had held the citadel so long illustrates its unique military importance, and it is well pointed out that an admirable solvent was found for the jealousies between Saul's tribe and David's by the selection of a capital belonging in a sense to both. It was in the border of Benjamin, but close to Judah. A part of the city had been burned in the time of the judges (Judg. 1. 8), but the fortress, occupying an impregnable position on the heights overhanging the deep valley of Hinnom, had until now remained in possession of the ancient inhabitants of the land. See Judg. 1. 21. **Spake unto David**—"The words that follow, attributed to the Jebusites, are very difficult to explain. The brevity of the passage makes it the more obscure. Instead of the common version it is better to translate thus: 'Thou shalt not come hither; the blind and the lame turn thee away, saying, David shall not come hither.' The words are thus seen to be a contemptuous boast of the Jebusites, who treated David's assault with derision, and said that blind and lame soldiers would suffice to turn away his forces. Such a fortress could be defended by those who could not see their assailants coming and those who could not fight them when they came."—*Terry*. **Thinking**—Hebrew, "saying." **David cannot**—They little knew the character of the man with whom they were dealing.

Authorised Version.

7 Nevertheless, Da'vid took the stronghold of Zi'on: ¹² the same is the city of Da'vid.

8 And Da'vid said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jeb'-u-sites, and the lame and the blind, *that are*

Revised Version.

7 in hither. Nevertheless Da'vid took the stronghold of Zi'on; the same is the city of Da'vid. And Da'vid said on that day, Whosoever smiteth the Jeb'u-sites, let him get up to the water course, ⁴ and *smite*

¹² Ver. 9; 1 Kings 2. 10; 8. 1.

⁴ Or, and as for the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul.

7. David took the stronghold of Zion—In spite of all the boasts of its defenders. Their very boasts inspired him and his men to greater energy and heroism. Zion was the height between the valley of Tyro-pæon, on the west and north, and the valley of Hinnom, on the south and west. It was the highest part of the city, and overlooked Mount Moriah on the east and Akra on the north. The city of David—His celebrated conquest and fortification of the place, and his making it the capital of the kingdom, would naturally have given it this name. Here, too, was his sepulchre.

8. "The Italics of the Authorised Version are alone enough to set that reading aside, but no safe substitute can be found. Perhaps the Revised Version text admits fewer objections than other renderings. The copyists are no doubt responsible for much of the obscurity, but no conjectural emendations have yet commanded confidence, and some are wild."—*Moulton*. David said—To urge on his men to storm the fortress. We cannot be sure about David's words, but we can see that they rang through all the host as an eloquent war cry. If we follow the Revised Version we must understand the "water course" to have been some spring high up in the rock, or some steep gully up which the climbers were to go to take the citadel on its strongest side. Others, however, interpret the passage thus, "Every one smiting a Jebusite, let him thrust him into the gulf beneath, both the lame and the blind, who hated David's soul." See 1 Chron. 11. 6. Whichever translation be followed the intrinsic meaning is the same. The war cry, whatever it was, gave rise, like so many memorable events (compare 1 Sam. 10. 12; 19. 24), to a national proverb, *The blind and the lame shall not come into the house*. The taunting words of the Jebusites made the expression "blind and lame" a hateful phrase, suggestive of bitter hostility and reproach, so that it came to be a kind of idiom applicable to any person or thing which was hateful to the soul. It was equivalent to saying, "Have no fellowship with those who, by word or deed, make themselves a reproach to Israel and hateful to a righteous soul." Compare 2 John, verses 10 and 11. Some have regarded this proverb as an explanation of a supposed law forbidding the blind and lame to enter the temple—which is absurd. Others consider it to be merely equivalent to "We won't have any dis-

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THE "STRONGHOLD OF ZION," AS IT NOW APPEARS.

Authorized Version.

hated of Da'vid's soul, ¹³ *he shall be chief and captain.* ¹² Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

⁹ So Da'vid dwelt in the fort, and called it ¹⁴ the city of Da'vid. And Da'vid built round about from Mil'lo and inward.

Revised Version.

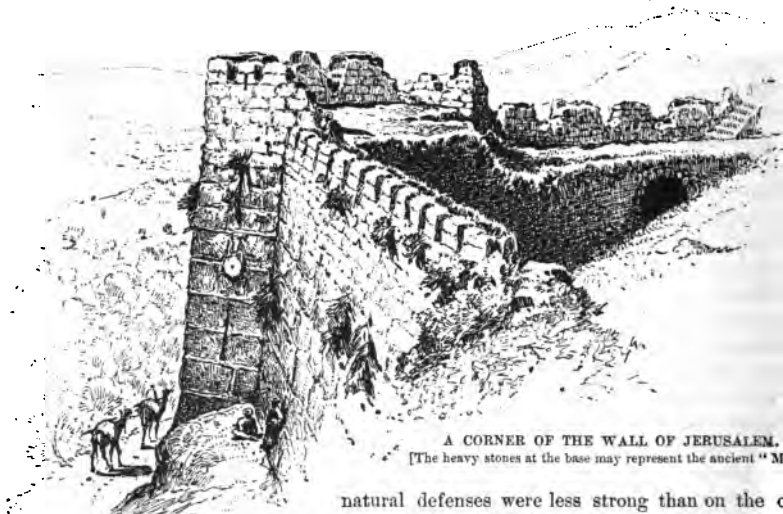
the lame and the blind, ⁵ that are hated of Da'vid's soul. Wherefore they say, ⁶ There are the blind and the lame; he cannot ⁹ come into the house. And Da'vid dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of Da'vid. And Da'vid built round about

¹² 1 Chron. 11. 6-9. — ⁵ Or, *Because they had said, even the blind and the lame, He shall not come into the house.* — ¹⁴ Ver. 7.

⁵ Another reading is, *that hate David's soul.* — ⁶ Or, *The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.*

agreeable people in our house." We must suppose it rather to have been a soldier's proverb, used of extremely strong fortresses which were thought, like Jebus, to need no garrison at all. **He shall be chief**—These words are not at all in the original. They have been inserted here from 1 Chron. 11. 6, though they are not needed to complete the sense. In the parallel passage it is related that Joab was first to climb the rampart, and as his reward was made commander of the army.

9. David dwelt in the fort—He took possession of the famous stronghold, made his headquarters there, and proceeded to fortify the place more strongly than ever. Hence Jerusalem came to be commonly spoken of as the **city of David**. See above on verse 7. "Fort" is the same word as "stronghold" in verse 7. **Millo**—Apparently some existing fortress. Compare Judg. 9. 6, 20, where "the house of Millo," describing a similar fortress in Shechem, gives some support to the interpretation of "house" in verse 8; 1 Kings 9. 15, 24; 11. 27; 2 Chron. 32. 5. The name means "a filling," and may have arisen from the filling up of the mountain or rampart with earth and stones. It was probably on the northern side of Zion, where the



natural defenses were less strong than on the other sides, for here he would have been likely to have

built round about . . . and inward; that is, built a wall, and filled up the interior space. The Millo was the outermost fortification. According to the account in Chronicles, while David was building and fortifying the new town to the north of Mount Zion, Joab, his newly appointed general, received a commission to restore the part that had been occupied by the ancient Jebus, to repair the breaches made during the siege, to preserve all the houses that had escaped the violence of the soldiery, and rebuild those that had been demolished or burnt in the sacking of the town.

Authorized Version.

10 And Da'vid ^cwent on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him.

11 And ¹⁵Hi'ram king of Tyre sent messengers to Da'vid, and cedar trees, and car-

Revised Version.

10 from Mil'lo and inward. And Da'vid waxed greater and greater; for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

11 And Hi'ram king of Tyre sent messengers to Da'vid, and cedar trees, and

^c Heb. *went going and growing.*—¹⁵ 1 Kings 5. 2; 1 Chron. 14. 1.

¹ See 1 Chron. 14. 1-16.

III. THE KINGDOM EXALTED. VERSES 10-12.

10. Compare 1 Sam. 3. 19. **David went on, and grew**—Literally, "David went going and growing." The hand of a master was shown when David took the scepter, in strong contrast with the fickle and spasmodic efforts of Saul. His capture of Zion put his military skill and prowess beyond all question, and his subsequent career for a long time was one of increasing prosperity and fame. **The Lord God of hosts**—A title of the Almighty, referring to his command over the "armies" of the created universe. **Was with him**—David's success was due, not only to his own energy and ability, but above all to the help of God. He who has God on his side can never fail of true success. We can have God with us if we will do his will.

11. And—It is probable that the events named in this verse are related a little out of their order, and by anticipation, to illustrate the statement just given. **Hiram**—Not this king, but probably his successor of the same name, was the friend of Solomon, and sent materials and artisans for the building of the temple. "According to *Josephus*, Hiram, Solomon's helper, began to reign only eight years before David's death. Since the palace was finished before Solomon was born (chap. 7. 2, 12), the present was probably a different Hiram, perhaps grandfather of the other. The city of Tyre, the yet more powerful offshoot of the powerful Sidon, was the main channel through which Semitic influence flowed toward the West. It was the Phœnician form of the Semitic alphabet which gave the Greeks, and ultimately the Romans, the art of writing, and there were other more equivocal benefits bestowed on Greece by that brilliant civilization. From Tyre, moreover, came the mighty colony of Carthage, which so nearly succeeded in crushing Rome. Mutual needs furthered the close alliance of Tyre and Jerusalem, cities within one hundred miles of each other, and inhabited by men speaking mutually intelligible languages."—*Moulton*. Tyre is called by Isaiah "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth." Ezekiel (chapters 26-28) furnishes a very full description of the power and splendor of this ancient Phœnician center of art and commerce. **Sent messengers**—The Tyrian king perceived that the Israelites, so long a subject and insignificant people, were now suddenly rising to power. They had thrown off the Philistine yoke, and were united under an energetic and statesmanlike king. He sought their friendship, as the interests of the two lands were harmonious; their language was similar, and Palestine could supply Tyre with grain and oil, while Tyre could give Palestine its man-



A CEDAR TREE GROWING WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF TYRE.

Authorized Version.
penters, and ^d masons: and they built Da'vid a house.

12 And Da'vid perceived that the LORD had established him king over Is'ra-el, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Is'ra-el's sake.

Revised Version.
carpenters, and masons: and they built

12 Da'vid an house. And Da'vid perceived that the LORD had established him king over Is'ra-el, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Is'ra-el's sake.

d Heb. hewers of the stone of the wall.

ufactures and its arts. **Cedar trees**—The Lebanon mountains in Hiram's domain were famous for cedars, a timber most highly prized for building purposes. The lumber was brought by the sea to Joppa, and thence conveyed overland to Jerusalem (2 Chron. 2. 16). **Carpenters, and masons**—The disorders and weakness of Israel had caused a decline in the arts, which now began to rise with the prosperity of the people. Solomon also called in the help of Phœnician architects and workmen for his buildings (1 Kings 5. 6; 7. 14). **They built David a house**—He called it in chap. 7. 2, a "house of cedar." "This verse is evidently the briefest possible outline of great and interesting events, the details of which are passed over. Now for the first time the king of Israel begins to put on the state of an established monarch."—*Terry*.

12. David perceived—Divine revelations may be given in and through the experiences of an eventful life. Many are the providences in which the devout man clearly recognizes the hand of God. David could not look back on his early training, his anointment by Samuel, his signal deliverances from Saul, his numerous victories, and finally his conquest of Zion and negotiations with the king of Tyre, and fail to see that Jehovah had established him king over Is'ra-el, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Is'ra-el's sake. The divine favor was evidently upon him and the kingdom and the people to whom he had become the leader. Men are but as instruments for the accomplishment of God's gracious plans for his people. So marked a compliment from the powerful king of Phœnicia showed that David's accession was



MODERN TYRE.

regarded by foreign potentates as implying the elevation of Israel to the rank of a "great power" (see note on verse 11); and such an encouragement was for David merely the outward sign of the favor of Jehovah.

WAITING FOR GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

1. **GOD'S PLANS, NOT OURS, WILL EVENTUALLY SUCCEED.** It was not David's genius or his prowess that made him king, but God's will. Human skill and human blunders are often credited with results that are really the outcome of the counsels of the Almighty. The powers that be are

ordained of God. He often does things that by our limited understanding are hard to explain, but though "his ways are past finding out" they are right, absolutely right every time; and be sure God's plans, not ours, will eventually succeed.

2. **THE REALLY SUCCESSFUL MAN IS IN HARMONY WITH GOD.** Napoleon and Alva, and many another leader in politics and war and business enterprise, secured by the force of their strong qualities temporary success; but even all such successes are *permitted* by God, and the real and genuine success, that which lasts through all time and into eternity, can only be secured by harmony with God. So, young man, young woman, if you would be successful in secular matters, make it the habit of your life to refer everything to God for his counsel. Use your best judgment, but depend on his direction.

3. **HE WHO IS IN HARMONY WITH GOD CAN AFFORD TO WAIT.** "The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small," and if one has faith in the steady working of divine plans he will not overthrow his own plans by hasty or precipitate action. One of the wisest and most successful men this world has ever seen gave it as his judgment that nine tenths of the blunders and failures that are made are due to "leaping too soon;" to "plucking the pear before it is ripe," in the phraseology of Napoleon Bonaparte; to that impatient desire to reap the fruits before the harvest has come, that is natural to us all. But he who knows that God is for him can afford to have patience.

4. **GOD'S BLESSING "MAKETH RICH, AND ADDETH NO SORROW."**

5. **GOD GIVES VICTORY.** The first event of the undivided reign was the conquest of the "stronghold of Zion," which until then had remained in the hands of the Jebusites, a heathen fortress in the heart of God's own land (Deut. 32. 43; 2 Chron. 7. 20).

6. **GOD GIVES INCREASED PROSPERITY.** The city of Jerusalem was enlarged and fortified to be the capital of the country, and the kingdom flourished and grew great, not only as to its internal condition, but in the eyes of the nations around. There is no rest, no victory, no sure and lasting increase in any life until the design of God has been carried out, and the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is enthroned in the heart as supreme and only Potentate. If a bad man be successful he has the weight of his guilt to carry around with him, to darken every hour of joy and discount every dollar. No man can secure that happiness which we all seek except first of all he seeks goodness. He who seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness will get all the other things; for "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The true founder of the kingdom was not Saul, but David. The first king was a Bedouin sheik, ruling from a tent, impulsive and unregulated in his acts, without settled policy, and a total failure. The second king was a statesman, a man of affairs, equal to the hour, and winning success. He found a dozen warring tribes, he left a mighty empire.

Note in this lesson, **David's Traits as a King.**

I. **He was the people's king.** Verse 1. David made every Israelite feel that he was his brother. He never forgot his lowly origin; recalling it more than once in his psalms (Psalm 23. 1). There was a popular strain in his nature which won the hearts of men.

II. **He was a king by nature.** Verse 2. David was a born leader of men. Even when Saul wore the crown it was David who led Israel. From the day when he met the giant of Gath, David showed the spirit of a king.

III. **He was a king by divine call.** Verse 2. The government of Israel was peculiar among the nations. Under the judges Jehovah was regarded as the King, and under the monarchy the anointed king was the representative and viceroy of the true unseen King.

IV. **He was a constitutional king.** Verse 3. Oriental kings were generally despots, ruling according to their own will. But there was a "league," a compact, formed when David be-

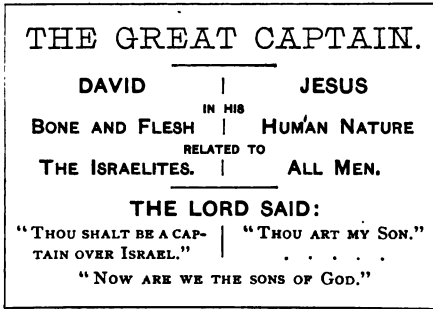
came king. There had been such a written statement under Saul (1 Sam. 10. 25), but it had been ignored. Now it is renewed under David, and in the main it was observed.

V. **He was a victorious king.** Verses 6-10. He saw at once the necessity for a strong central government and a capital. For four centuries the conquest of Canaan had remained unfinished, and strongholds were in the hands of the original Canaanites. David com-

pleted the work begun by Joshua; he put down insubordination; he built a capital, and made Jerusalem the center of power.

VI. **He was a religious king.** Verses 11, 12. He possessed the spiritual insight to discern God as the giver of his success, for he was a man of faith, and he gave the glory of his greatness to the Lord God, the true King of Israel.

In all these points we might see in David a type or illustration of Christ, the King of God's spiritual Israel.



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS II AND III.

1. David multiplies wives (1 Sam. 25. 42-44; 2 Sam. 3. 3-5, 14; 5. 13). 2. War with the Philistines (2 Sam. 5. 17-25).

LESSON III.—JULY 19.

THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM.—2 SAM. 6. 1-12.

[Read 2 Sam. 6. 1-23. Compare Psalm 24.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.—Psalm 84. 12.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—B. C. 1047.

PLACES.—1. Kirjath-jearim, here called "Baale of Judah." 2. Nachou's threshing floor, afterward called "Perez-uzzah." 3. The house of Obed-edom, on or near Mount Zion.

WHY THE ARK WAS REMOVED.—Having made himself master of Jerusalem, David vigorously undertook its fortification, so that this natural stronghold was soon made almost impregnable. The power of the Philistines was at last broken, and years of peace and prosperity followed. Now was evidently the auspicious time for David to make his capital the central seat of worship for the nation. Long had the ark and the tabernacle been separated, and the most sacred treasure of the covenant people still remained at Kirjath-jearim, where it had been deposited after its restoration by the Philistines (1 Sam. 7. 1). David was wise to see that the bringing of this sacred ark to Jerusalem would help to consolidate his kingdom. It was the appointed emblem of the presence of Jehovah. If David were indeed the theocratic king, acting under divine leadership, his government and the religion of the people must be closely united, so that each would support and defend the other. The history furnished in the present lesson gives us, therefore, an illustration of David's piety as well as of his political sagacity. The new tabernacle which the king now "pitched" in Jerusalem became, as he desired, the center of the nation's worship throughout his reign. See 1 Chron. 16. 1, 4-6, 37, 38.

But the old tabernacle, "in the high place that was at Gibeon," was also a seat of worship, possessing still the brazen altar, and ministered to by Zadok, the high priest, who had in some way obtained a coordinate position with Abiathar toward the end of Saul's reign. The wish not to disturb this relation has been suggested as a reason why David did not transplant the ancient tabernacle. There was certainly, also, the diminished glory of the structure which had witnessed the orgies of Eli's sons, and had long lost the ark and a priest with Urim and Thummim. One may add the probability that the fabric itself, however religiously cared for through four centuries, was rapidly succumbing to the ravages of time.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT.—1 Chronicles, chapters 13, 15, and 16 (more extensive).

LESSON HYMN.—

With stately towers and bulwarks strong, Unrivaled and alone,
Loved theme of many a sacred song, God's holy city shone.
Thus fair was Zion's chosen seat, The glory of all lands;
Yet fairer, and in strength complete, The Christian temple stands.
The faithful of each clime and age This glorious Church compose;
Built on a Rock, with idle rage The threatening tempest blows.—*Harriet Auber.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (July 13), The Ark Brought to Jerusalem, 2 Sam. 6. 1-12. *Tuesday*, The ark described, Exod. 25. 10-22. *Wednesday*, Captured by the enemy, 1 Sam. 4. 1-11. *Thursday*, Obedience needful, 1 Chron. 15. 1-3, 11-16. *Friday*, David's psalm of praise, 1 Chron. 16. 7-22. *Saturday*, The psalm continued, 1 Chron. 16. 23-36. *Sunday*, Acceptable worship, Heb. 12. 18-29.

Authorized Version.

1 Again, Da'vid gathered together all the chosen men of Is'ra-el, thirty thousand.

2 And ¹Da'vid arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Ba'al-e of Ju'dah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, ²whose name is called by the name of

Revised Version.

1 ¹And Da'vid again gathered together all the chosen men of Is'ra-el, thirty thousand.

2 And Da'vid arose, and went with all the people that were with him, from Ba'al-e Ju'dah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, ²which is called by the Name, even

¹ 1 Chron. 12. 5, 6.—^a Or, Baalah, that is, Kirjath-jearim, Josh. 15. 9, 20.—^b Or, at which the name, even the name of the LORD of hosts, was called upon.

¹ See 1 Chron. 12. 5-14.—² Heb. whereupon is called the Name.

I. THE JOYFUL PROCESSION. VERSES 1-5.

1. The student should remember that the priestly annals are to be found in Chronicles in the same way that the prophetic annals are preserved for us in the Books of the Kings. This gives the parallel account a peculiarly valuable relation to this lesson. **Again**—But not now for war. David would make the removal of the ark to Jerusalem a truly national act.

2. **From Baale of Judah**—Probably, as in Chronicles, "to Baalah." The place was otherwise called Kirjath-jearim; the original Canaanitish name remaining with the Israelites. It was on the border of Judah and Benjamin, eight miles west of Jerusalem, and is now called *Kuryet el-Enab*. **To bring in from thence the ark of God**—Notice the deep reverence in this phrase. The ark did not belong to David or to Israel; it was God's. It was a chest of wood, plated within and without with gold, about four feet long by two and a half wide, made under Moses's direction at the foot of Mount Sinai, and containing the two tables of the Ten Commandments. The ark had been in seclusion at "Baale" for more than sixty years after its return from the land of the Philistines. Read 1 Sam. 6. 10-21; 7. 1, 2. **Whose name is called**—This passage is better translated thus: "Over which is called the name, the name of Yahweh [Jehovah] of hosts, inhabiting the cherubim." The golden cover or lid of the ark was constructed with a cherub on each end, and these cherubim stretched their wings on high and covered the lid, which was called the "mercy seat;" or perhaps we would better say the *propitiatory seat*. See the description in Exod. 25. 17-22. A literal reverence forbade the

Authorised Version.

the LORD of hosts ² that dwelleth *between* the cherubim.

3 And they ^cset the ark of God ^supon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of A-bin'a-dab that *was* in ^dGib'e-ah: and Uz'zah and A-hi'o, the sons of A-bin'a-dab, drove the new cart.

² 1 Sam. 4. 4; Psalm 80. 1. — ^c Heb. *mado to ride*. — ^s See Num. 7. 9; 1 Sam. 6. 7. — ^d Or, *The hill*.

Revised Version.

the name of the LORD of hosts that ² sitteth

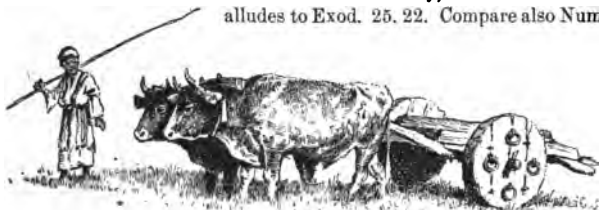
3 upon the cherubim. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of A-bin'a-dab that was in ⁴ the hill: and Uz'zah and A-hi'o, the sons

² Or, *dwelleth between*. — ⁴ Or, *Gibeah*.



KIRJATH-JEARIM, OTHERWISE CALLED BAALE OF JUDAH.

later Jews to pronounce the dread name Yahweh. Compare Lev. 24. 16, etc. **Dwelleth between the cherubim**—"Cherubim" is the Hebrew plural form of cherub. The cherubs were conceived as the bearers of God (Psalm 18. 10), or the upholders of his throne (Ezek. 11. 22), hence representing his presence. Their form is not known with certainty, but it is supposed to have been human, with six wings each (Isa. 6. 2). Some think that they symbolized redeemed humanity, ever in communion with God. This verse directly alludes to Exod. 25. 22. Compare also Num. 7. 89; 1 Sam. 4. 4; Psalm 80. 1.



AN ORIENTAL OX CART.

3. **They set the ark of God upon a new cart**—They thus followed the example of the Philistines (1 Sam. 6. 7), and not the command of the law, which was that the ark of God should be borne on the shoulders of the priests. This shows the general neg-

lect and ignorance of law into which Israel had lapsed. There was reverence, however, in the use of a "new cart," one not polluted by common use. **The house of Abinadab**—See 1 Sam. 7. 1. It had been there seventy years, which, as *Thenius* notes, causes a difficulty as to the age of Abinadab's "sons;" there is, however, no reason why the word should not mean grandsons, or even great-grandsons, as in several other places. **That was in Gibeah**—Rather, as in the margin, "that was in The hill," an eminence at Kirjath-jearim, not the town of Gibeah, which was eight miles distant. **Uzzah and Ahio, the sons**—Or, as we have seen, the more remote descendants. The word "Ahio" should be read "his brother." The text is confused; but it would seem that Uzzah sat in the cart with the ark, while his brother led the oxen.

Authorized Version.

4 And they brought it out of ⁴the house of A-bin'a-dab which *was* at Gib'e-ah, ⁵accompanying the ark of God: and A-hi'o went before the ark.

5 And Da'vid and all the house of Is'ra-el played before the LORD on all manner of *instruments made of fir wood*, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

6 And when they came to ⁵Na'chon's threshing floor, Uz'zah ⁶put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen ⁷shook it.

Revised Version.

4 of A-bin'a-dab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of A-bin'a-dab, which was in ⁵the hill, with the ark of God: and A-hi'o went before the ark.

5 And Da'vid and all the house of Is'ra-el played before the LORD ⁶with all manner of *instruments made of* ⁷fir wood, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with ⁸castanets, and with cymbals.

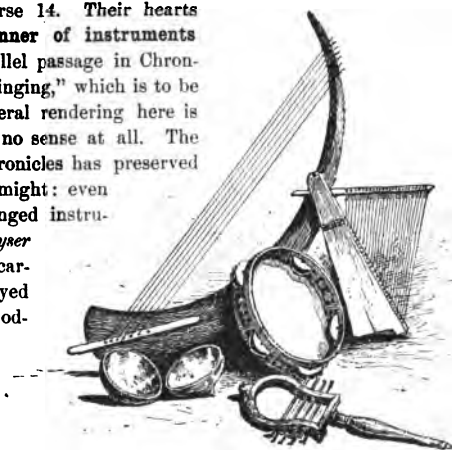
6 And when they came to the threshing floor of Na'con, Uz'zah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of

⁴1 Sam. 7. 1.—⁵Heb. *with*.—⁶1 Chron. 13. 9, *Chidon*.—⁷See Num. 4. 15.—⁸f Or, *stumbled*.

⁸Or, *Gibeath*.—⁹See 1 Chron. 13. 8.—¹⁰Or, *cypress*.—¹¹Or, *sistra*.

4. **They brought**—The first part of this verse is evidently a repetition from the preceding. The latter part of the verse, beginning [with] the ark of God, should follow immediately after **new cart**, at the close of the preceding verse. **Ahio went before**—Guiding the oxen, while his brother Uzzah watched the ark. They had been accustomed to its presence from childhood, and were perhaps wanting in becoming reverence for it; for often custom breeds carelessness in sacred things. Let us all beware of this subtle tendency toward irreverence.

5. **Played before the Lord**—The word thus translated implies a jubilant dance as well as music. See verse 14. Their hearts were exultant with holy joy. **On all manner of instruments made of fir wood**—Instead of this the parallel passage in Chronicles reads, "With all their might, and with singing," which is to be preferred before our text in Samuel. A literal rendering here is "with all trees of cypress," which makes no sense at all. The Septuagint makes it quite certain that Chronicles has preserved the original reading here, "With all their might: even with songs, and with harps." **Harps**—Stringed instruments of various shapes. According to *Leyser* the harp was a lyre of seven to ten strings, carried on a strap around the neck, and played with a plectrum; the **psalteries** resembled modern harps (or perhaps guitars) in miniature. **Timbrels**—Also called *tabrets*, somewhat like tambourines. **Cornets**—Tiny metal rods loosely adjusted in a metal frame, and played by shaking. **Cymbals**—Convex metal plates clashed together just like modern cymbals.



HARP, PSALTERY, TIMBREL, CORNET (SISTRUM), AND CYMBALS.

II. UZZAH'S ERROR. VERSES 6-9.

6. **Nachon's threshing floor**—Called "Chidon" in Chronicles. "Nachon" is not a proper name, but means "established" or "appointed." The location is now unknown. It has been suggested that arrangements had been made for feeding the oxen here, and that they stumbled or grew restive on being pulled up. **Uzzah put forth his hand . . . and took hold**—"He did not think—the frequent plea of sinners; but it was his business to think."—*E. Stock*. The law of Num. 4. 15 provided that the sons of Kohath should approach and carry the ark, but added, "They shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die." **The oxen shook it**—Others render, "the oxen stumbled," or "kicked," or "threw it down." The precise meaning is un-

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uz'zah, and ⁹ God smote him there for <i>his</i> error; and there he died by the ark of God.	7 it; for the oxen ⁹ stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uz'zah; and God smote him there for his ¹⁰ error;
⁹ 1 Sam. 6. 19.— ⁹ Or, rashness.	⁹ Or, were reeive. Or, threw it down.— ¹⁰ Or, rashness.

certain, but the obvious reason for Uzzah's act was a fear lest the ark would be overthrown or injured by the movement of the oxen.

7. **The anger of the Lord was kindled**—Doubtless God was offended at the carelessness of the whole transaction; but now it was necessary to interfere, lest his ark should become common and despised, for one slight would surely be followed by others, and one act of severity would result in abiding reverence. God's anger is not a hasty, blind passion, but a principle of his being, called forth when men's conduct makes it necessary. **God smote him**—"Uzzah's death was necessary for a solemn warning to David and his people."—*Cambridge Bible*. God dealt with him as he often deals with men, permitting the death of one man for the salvation of many. It is not necessary to suppose that his soul was lost, for of his spiritual condition



A THRESHING FLOOR.

we know nothing, and God does not fix men eternally because of one hasty act, which may have been repented of in a moment. **There he died**—"This severity of punishment is explicable when we keep in mind that it was one of the highest purposes of the Old Testament revelation to inculcate the doctrine of the unapproachable majesty and holiness of God. This explains also the bitter judgment of the people of Beth-shemesh for an act of the same nature as that of Uzzah (1 Sam. 6. 19)."—*Terry*. "The full meaning of this mysterious judgment cannot be grasped by us, and for most of us it is enough to know that it was done by the God who taught us to trust his love to the uttermost when he came among us as man with men. We can see how supremely important it was that the Israelites, in the childhood of the world's education, should learn how awfully holy was their God, and how implicit and unquestioning their obedience must be. Now, Uzzah must have known how strict were the commands of God concerning the ark, and how its inviolable sanctity as the emblem of Jehovah's presence had been vindicated just before it came to Abinadab's house by the death of the seventy irreverent priests at Beth-shemesh (1 Sam. 6. 19). He had forgotten the sternness of God through long experience of his bounty, and the sacred symbol had lost its terrors through familiarity. Uzzah has many lessons to teach us even to-day."—*Moulton*. See comment on verse 4.

THERE WAS NOTHING EXCEPTIONAL either in the curse of Uzzah or the blessing of Obed-edom. They were the outworking of two of God's invariable laws: 1. Disobedience is always

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
8 And Da'vid was displeased, because the LORD had ^a made a breach upon Uz'zah: and he called the name of the place ^b 'Pe'rez-uz'zah to this day.	8 and there he died by the ark of God. And Da'vid was displeased, because the LORD had broken forth upon Uz'zah: and he called that place ^c 'Pe'rez-uz'zah, unto this
9 And ^d Da'vid was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?	9 day. And Da'vid was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, How shall the ark
10 So Da'vid would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of Da'vid: but Da'vid carried it aside into the house of O'bed-edom ^e the Git'tite.	10 of the LORD come unto me? So Da'vid would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of Da'vid; but Da'vid carried it aside into the house of O'bed-

^a Heb. broken.—ⁱ That is, The breach of Uzzah.—^b Psalm 119, 130; see Luke 5. 8, 9.—^c 1 Chron. 12. 13.

^c That is, The breach of Uzzah.

punished; 2. The divine presence always brings temporal as well as spiritual blessing. These laws work as really now as then, only we are so busy with science and business we think we have not time to watch the movement of God's fingers. If you and I had been with David, with our modern philosophy, we might have seen nothing but a poor apoplectic in Uzzah and a lucky farmer in Obed-edom; and if David lived in my home or yours to-day, with his antique but very sound theology, he certainly would reverentially recognize God's blessing and God's curse where we perhaps talk of fortune and mischance.

8. "The passage must be guarded from the apparent suggestion that David was wroth at Jehovah's action. His was an intense vexation at the apparent failure of his darling project, not lessened by the feeling that he might have averted the disaster himself by enforcing the proper ritual for the transportation of the ark. So he called the spot 'Judgment-of-Uzzah,' that posterity might not lose the lessons of the fate visited on the miserable man's presumption."—*Moulton*. **David was displeased**—Not against God, but with the failure of his plans. Mingled vexation, grief, and indignation possessed his soul. Note Samuel's emotions as recorded in 1 Sam. 15. 11. **Made a breach**—Or, "rent a rent." Used here, as in 2 Sam. 5. 20 and Exod. 19. 22, 24, for a sudden divine judgment. **Peres-uzsah**—"Judgment-of-Uzzah," or "Breach-of-Uzzah." Gen. 16. 14; 21. 31; 32. 2, 30; Judg. 15. 19; 1 Sam. 7. 12, all tell of places renamed after some such signal event. **To this day**—The final revision of the record was made long afterward, maybe as late as the time of Ezra, 400 B. C.

9. **David was afraid**—The judgment of Uzzah made a profound impression on him, and under its spell he had the good sense to set about inquiring into the proper method of transporting the ark. No doubt had ever occurred to him before as to Jehovah's approval of his project. Now he feels the grave responsibility of bringing the dread relic within his city; irreverence with its terrible penalty would be so hard to prevent. Jehovah reassured him by a demonstration of the truth, "Them that honor me, I will honor." **How shall the ark of the Lord come to me**—Had he asked this question sooner a life would have been saved and the joy of the people would not have been so suddenly changed into mourning.

III. THE BLESSED HOUSEHOLD. VERSES 10-12.

10. **Would not remove**—Not for the present, until the will of the LORD should be more clearly revealed. **Unto him**—Into his own capital and nearer to his own palace, lest it might become the cause of terror among the people. **City of David**—The rapidly growing suburb on Mount Zion and the adjacent hills. **Carried it aside**—Hebrew, "caused it to turn aside." He gave up his immediate purpose to bring it to himself in Jerusalem, and had it put aside into the house of Obed-edom. From 1 Chron. 26. 8 we learn that Obed-edom was a Levite of the family of Korahites; in 1 Chron. 15. 24 one of this name is mentioned as among the doorkeepers of the ark. What led David to select his house is not stated, but perhaps Obed-edom himself requested it and offered his house as a temporary shelter, or, more

Authorized Version.

11 ¹⁰ And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of O'bed-e'dom the Gittite three months: and the LORD ¹¹ blessed O'bed-e'dom, and all his household.

12 And it was told king Da'vid, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of O'bed-e'dom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. ¹² So Da'vid went and brought up the ark of God from the house of O'bed-e'dom into the city of Da'vid with gladness.

Revised Version.

11 e'dom the Gittite. And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of O'bed-e'dom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed O'bed-e'dom, and all his house.

12 And it was told king Da'vid, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of O'bed-e'dom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. ¹² And Da'vid went and brought up the ark of God from the house of O'bed-e'dom into the city of Da'vid with joy.

⁴⁰ 1 Chron. 13. 14. — ¹¹ Gen. 30. 27; 39. 5. — ¹² 1 Chron. 15. 25.

¹² See 1 Chron. 15. 25-16. 3.



THE ARCH OF A FOUNTAIN IN JERUSALEM.

probable still, his house was close to the scene of Uzzah's death, and in their terror David and his men carried the ark into the first shelter they could find. **The Gittite**—This phrase refers probably to the place of Obed-edom's birth; probably the Levitical city of Gath-rimmon; possibly the Philistine city of Gath.

11. Three months—A short stay, but long enough to bring God's blessing. **The LORD blessed Obed-edom**—The house was doubtless watched with mingled awe and terror by its neighbors. How God's favor was shown we are not told; perhaps by increasing prosperity, perhaps by a manifestation of the divine communications to the household. "This statement suggests many pious reflections upon the blessedness of God's presence in a home. Where the symbols or representatives of his revelation are honored there is he to enrich the worshippers with tokens of his favor."—*Terry*. **All his household**—The descendants of good men have special blessings within their reach.

12. It was told king David—Such was the interest awakened by the fate of Uzzah that all news of the ark and the effects of its presence were sure to be reported. This would be good news for David, and set him to more earnest inquiries as to the right method of bringing the ark to himself. Compare verse 9. **Because of the ark**—There was no doubt but the blessings which came to Obed-edom were on account of his reverent care of the ark. **David went and brought up the ark**—It appears from 1 Chron. 15. 2, that upon examination David learned that "none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever." He accordingly made all proper arrangements, and assembled the sons of Aaron and the Levites, as is more fully detailed in Chronicles. All these preliminary arrangements our author omits from his narrative. **With gladness**—One needs to read the sequel of this lesson (verses 18-19) and the parallel in Chronicles to understand the memorable festivities of that occasion. Verse 17 informs us that the king had a tabernacle prepared for the ark in the city, and there he deposited it, and "offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord." This was a great political and religious event, which centralized the national spirit and the religious interests of the people. It is commonly believed that Psalm 24 was composed for this occasion.

IN THE STUDY OF THIS LESSON we may learn: "1. That a sound morality and a permanent

government require attention to religious principle. 2. That all religious ceremonies and worship must have reverent regard to the majesty and holiness of God. 3. That ignorance of divine law may be very culpable and involve incalculable loss. 4. That "our God is a consuming fire" as well as the highest impersonation of love. 5. That pure religion secures the highest blessing for the individual, the home, and the State. 6. That true religious life and worship are consistent with festivity and joy."—*Terry*.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD'S SHRINE.

1. **THERE IS NO SAFETY WHERE GOD IS NEGLECTED.** Godless homes, godless schools, godless political parties, godless nations are doomed to overthrow. David was wise in seeking to bring back the shrine of God; and if, by any sinful neglect of yours or your parents, God's shrine has been removed from you in any sense, follow David's example and bring it back at once. Is the blessing no longer asked in your home? Has family prayer been discontinued? Do you no longer read your Bible daily? Are any of the little or larger means of grace—which may be looked upon as the arks of God, the shrines in which the divine Presence dwells—are any of these neglected by you? If so, set out like David and bring the ark of God back to your tabernacle.

2. **NOTHING IS TOO GOOD FOR GOD'S SERVICE.** David was a philosopher as well as a king when he played before the Lord on all manner of instruments. Those were doubtless good men who broke the statues in the old English abbeys, and made the pathway of the Puritan armies a track of barbaric ruin. So were those good men who in later days ruled out all songs from the sanctuary; and some good men yet reject all hymns but the psalms of David, and cannot worship if the sound of an instrument be heard in the church. But such people, while good, are in error. The best of everything belongs to God. No church can be too beautiful for him, no ointment too costly to pour forth in his honor, no music too exquisite to sound in his ears. Let us surround the daily practice of religion in our homes and our church with all that is beautiful within our reach.

3. **THOUGHTLESSNESS IN WORSHIP IS A FLAGRANT SIN.** God's anger is not shown now precisely as it was in ancient times; but if he is not guiltless who taketh the name of God in vain, then God must be angry with many a bright-faced maiden and many a cheerful youth who talk and laugh during prayer time, and who join in singing the most solemn hymns with thoughtless hearts. Beware of repeating the sin of Uzzah in thoughtlessness.

4. **GOD'S PRESENCE MAKES PROSPERITY.** This truth is too often forgotten, but it is just as true now as it was in the days of Obed-edom. It is true that many good people are poor, and many are sick, and the calamities of life seem to come alike to all; nevertheless there is that in the practice of goodness that inevitably makes for temporal success. We have the best authority for saying that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4. 8).

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

We find in this lesson certain suggestions concerning **The Worship of God.**

I. **The worship of God should be prominent in a people's life.** During the reign of Saul the ark of God was neglected, and at one time the priests were fiercely murdered. David's first care after his throne became secure was to bring forth the ark and to renew the public worship. He placed religion in the forefront of the national life. So should it be in every well-ordered State. The government should not control religion nor establish a Church, but it should foster religion. A church is the nucleus of life in many a community.

II. **It should be popular and universal.** Verse 2. All the people—king, nobles, and commons—united in this service of worship. It is unfortunate, and may be ruinous, when any

class, either high or low, stands aloof from the house of God. The Church should be for the people, and for all the people.

III. **It should be joyful.** Verses 3-5. God's people are not a sad, dismal company. There is every reason why they should be the happiest people on the earth. Their songs, their prayers, and their acts of worship should breathe a spirit of gladness.

IV. **It should be reverent.** Verses 6-9. While there was spontaneity and warmth in this service of David there was a lack of reverence and a neglect of the law which brought disastrous consequences. Let us consider concerning this event, 1. That death is not to be regarded as the greatest of evils, and that Uzzah's death was no token that his soul was lost, for he was a sincere worshiper; 2. That in the childhood of God's people and their training school severity was necessary.

Israel was to be taught that the ark represented the actual presence of God among his people, and it must be held in reverence. God's house now is not a chest nor a building, but the hearts of his people.

V. **It will bring a blessing.** Verses 10-12. The house where God was honored received an abundant reward; and so will every house be rewarded where God's altar is reared and maintained in the spirit of true worship.

THE ARK OF GOD

BROUGHT	
DEATH	BLESSING
TO	
UZZAH	OBED-EDOM
BECAUSE OF	
DISOBEDIENCE.	TRUST.

"BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT TRUSTETH IN THEE."

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS III AND IV.

1. David removes the ark of the Lord into the tabernacle (2 Sam. 6. 13-20). 2. Nathan approves David's purpose to build God a house (2 Sam. 7. 1-3).

LESSON IV.—JULY 26.

GOD'S PROMISES TO DAVID.—2 SAM. 7. 4-16.

[Read the whole of chapter 7.]

GOLDEN TEXT—In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.—Psalm 71. 1.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—B. C. 1042.

PLACE.—The Royal Palace in Jerusalem.

LESSON HYMN.—

The Lord Jehovah reigns, His throne is built on high;
The garments he assumes Are light and majesty:
His glories shine with beams so bright No mortal eye can bear the sight.
Through all his mighty works Amazing wisdom shines;
Confounds the powers of hell, And all their dark designs;
Strong is his arm, and shall fulfill His great decrees and sovereign will.
And will this sovereign King Of glory condescend,
And will he write his name, My Father and my Friend?
I love his name, I love his word; Join all my powers to praise the Lord.—Isaac Watts.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (July 20), God's Promises to David, 2 Sam. 7. 1-16. *Tuesday*, David's response, 2 Sam. 7. 18-29. *Wednesday*, The promise remembered, 1 Chron. 28. 1-10. *Thursday*, The promise fulfilled, 1 Kings 8. 12-21. *Friday*, Precious promises, Psalm 132. *Saturday*, A firm covenant, Jer. 33. 14-22. *Sunday*, The established throne, Heb. 1. 1-12.

Authorized Version.

4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Na'than, saying,
5 Go and tell a my servant Da'vid, Thus saith the LORD, 'Shalt thou build me a house for me to dwell in?

6 Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children

Revised Version.

4 And it came to pass the same night, that the word of the LORD came unto Na'than, 5 saying, Go and tell my servant Da'vid, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me

6 an house for me to dwell in? for I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I

a Heb. to my servant, to David.—1 See 1 Kings 5. 3; 8. 19; 1 Chron. 22. 8; 28. 2.—b 1 Kings 8. 16.

I. DAVID'S WORK. VERSES 4-11.

4. **It came to pass that night**—"There is much solemnity in the way the subject is here introduced. The night was the recognized time for prophetic visions. Compare 1 Sam. 3. 3; Num. 12. 6, etc."—*Bishop Hervey*. David's mistake was pious and from an honest mind; so God hastens, so to speak, to correct it. **The word of the Lord**—In what precise form we know not. **Came unto Nathan**—We see now the difference between Nathan's personal opinion and the revelation of God through him. "A new era had arrived in the history of Israel. The earthly kingdom was to be established, and a permanent office was to be instituted coordinately with it, in order to represent God's supremacy over the earthly monarch, and to advise, to exhort, and, if need were, to correct, rebuke, and even to denounce the earthly sovereign for his sins, and even to declare his dethronement in the name of God, the supreme Ruler of Israel, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and thus to prepare the way for the time when the functions of king and prophet would coalesce in Christ. This permanent office, placed side by side with the throne, was the office of prophet."—*Wordsworth*.

5. **My servant David**—The term was a mark of special honor, as only a few, like Moses and Joshua, are by Jehovah himself named "servants of the Lord." **Shalt thou build me a house**—Compare verse 11. "The question implies a negative answer, and in 1 Chron. 17. 4 we have, 'Thou shalt not build me a house.'"—*Terry*. The thought of this verse is, "Thou shalt not build me a house, but I will build thee a house [a family line upon the throne], and thy son shall build me a house." God recognizes, honors, and rewards the pious desires of his people even when he does not accept their plans.

6. **Whereas**—Rather, "since," or "because." This introduces the reason why David was not to build the house. **I have not dwelt**—While the land was not yet fully possessed by his people God would not occupy a settled abode, but dwelt in a movable tent. **Even to this day**—Four hundred and fifty years after the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. **Have walked**—"As a tent is a traveler's dwelling, so, as long as God's dwelling was a tent, he himself appeared as if traveling, going from place to place."—*Keil and Delitzsch*. "This migratory character of



THE TABERNACLE.

Authorized Version.

of Is'ra-el out of E'gypt, even to this day, but have walked in ^a a tent and in a tabernacle.

7 In all the places wherein I have ⁴ walked with all the children of Is'ra-el spake I a word with ^b any of the tribes of Is'ra-el, whom I commanded ^c to feed my people Is'ra-el, saying, Why build ye not me a house of cedar?

8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my

Revised Version.

brought up the children of Is'ra-el out of E'gypt, even to this day, but have walked ⁷ in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all places wherein I have walked with all the children of Is'ra-el, spake I a word with ¹ any of the tribes of Is'ra-el, whom I commanded to feed my people Is'ra-el, saying, Why have ⁸ ye not built me an house of cedar? Now

^a Exod. 40. 18, 19, 34. — ⁴ Lev. 26. 11, 12; Deut. 23. 14. — ^b any of the judges, 1 Chron. 17. 6. — ^c Chap. 5. 2; Psalm 78. 71, 72; Matt. 2. 6; Acts 20. 28.

¹ In 1 Chron. 17. 6, any of the judges.

his Church was a preparation and training, not only for faith in his omnipresence, but also for the reception of the doctrine of the universality of the Church, not to be limited to Palestine, but to be extended to all nations; and so Stephen expounds it. See Acts 7. 48-49."—*Wordsworth*.

In a tent and in a tabernacle

—"The words *a tent* refer especially to the outward covering of skins, etc.; the *tabernacle* denotes the framework of boards and bars. Observe the constant

reference to the exodus and to the details as given in the books of Moses."—*Bishop Hervey*. From this description we may learn how God feels with his people, adapts himself to their state, and shares their varied experiences.

7. In all the places—The wilderness, Gilgal, Shiloh, Kirjath-jearim, and now Zion. Spake I a word—"Did I give a command to any one of the tribes through which I governed

Israel." "The meaning is, that whatever tribe had in times past supplied the ruler of Israel, God had never required any of those tribes to build a house in one of their cities."—*Bishop Hervey*. When a ruler arose for Israel out of any tribe his rule was considered that of his tribe, as when Ephraim ruled in the person of Joshua, or Benjamin in Saul, or Judah in David. See 1 Chron. 28. 4. "In Psalm 78. 67, 68, the election of David as prince, and of Zion as the site of the sanctuary, is described as the election of the tribe of Judah and the rejection of the tribe of Ephraim."—*Keil and Delitzsch*. Commanded to feed—To tend, as a shepherd his sheep. A house of cedar—"Beams of cedar marked a costly building. Of course the cedar of Lebanon is a totally different tree from what we improperly call the *red* or *Virginian cedar*, which supplies the sweet-scented cedar wood, and is really a kind of juniper (*Juniperus Virginiana*). The cedar of Lebanon is a close-grained, light-colored, yellowish wood, with darker knots and veins."—*Bishop Hervey*.

8. Now therefore—The reason why God chose not to have his house built at this time was that the throne of David was not fully settled, and that great wars were yet to be waged, which would engross David's attention, employ all his power, and unfit him for the work of building the temple. So shalt thou say—"The reasons why David's zeal was thus checked must be carefully considered. The unsettled condition of the nation had made a fixed sanctuary impossible hitherto, and even now the time for it was not yet fully come. The house of David must be firmly established and peace secured before this great step in the history of the national religion could be advantageously taken. Again, David was not to build the house, 'because he had shed much blood, and had made great wars' (1 Chron. 22. 8; 28. 3)."—*Carr*.



THE SHEEPCOTE.

Authorized Version.

servant Da'vid, Thus saith the LORD of hosts,
 * I took thee from the sheepcote, c from following
 the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over
 Is'ra-el :

9 And ⁷ I was with thee whithersoever thou
 wentest, ⁸ and have cut off all thine enemies
 d out of thy sight, and have made thee ⁹ a
 great name, like unto the name of the great
 men that are in the earth.

10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my
 people Is'ra-el, and will ¹⁰ plant them, that they
 may dwell in a place of their own, and move
 no more; ¹¹ neither shall the children of wick-
 edness afflict them any more, as beforetime,

Revised Version.

therefore thus shalt thou say unto my
 servant Da'vid, Thus saith the LORD of
 hosts, I took thee from the ² sheepcote,
 from following the sheep, that thou should-
 est be ³ prince over my people, over Is'-
 9 ra-el: and I have been with thee whitherso-
 ever thou wentest, and have cut off all
 thine enemies from before thee; and I will
 make thee a great name, like unto the
 name of the great ones that are in the
 10 earth. And I will appoint a place for
 my people Is'ra-el, and will plant them,
 that they may dwell in their own place,
 and be moved no more; neither shall the
 children of wickedness afflict them any

* 1 Sam. 16. 11, 12; Psalm 78. 70.—c Heb. from after.—
 d 1 Sam. 19. 14; chap. 5. 10; 8. 6, 14.—e 1 Sam. 31. 6; Psalm 89.
 23.—f Heb. from thy face.—g Gen. 12. 2.—h Psalm 44. 2;
 80. 8; Jer. 24. 6; Amos 9. 15.—i Psalm 89. 22.

² Or, pasture. —³ Or, leader.

bridge Bible. The Lord of hosts—*Jehovah-sebajoth*, "the Lord of the universe." I took thee from the sheepcote—"Better, 'from the pasture.' The word means 'habitation,' which in reference to flocks means, not where they spend the night, but where they feed; and this suits the context of our passage."—*C. H. Toy*. "It is good for those who are come to great preferment to be often reminded of their small beginnings, that they may always be humble and thankful."—*M. Henry*.

9. Was with thee—God had been with him in his battle with Goliath, in the perils of Saul's court and of the exile, in wars and political movements. Cut off all thine enemies—Here referring especially to Saul and the leaders of his party (2 Sam. 3. 1; 4. 8; 1 Sam. 18. 29; 20. 15, 16; 24. 4; 26. 8). Other enemies rose up afterward (see chap. 8), but the victory gained over the former by God's help was an assurance to David that the others would be eventually cut off. Have made thee a great name—Unquestionably David appears as the ablest, the most successful, and in every way the greatest of the kings of Israel. His is the noblest name, after Moses, in the history. He found Israel a disorganized, weak confederacy of twelve tribes, without coherence and without influence. He healed old strifes, consolidated the nation, conquered all the surrounding lands, and left to his son a united empire twelve times the size of Israel when he assumed its crown. Most of his measures were dictated by a profound wisdom, and in true greatness his character, notwithstanding his sins, rose above all his successors. During his time alone Israel stood as the controlling oriental monarchy. "A great name is what they who have have great reason to be thankful for and may improve to good purposes, but what they that have not have no reason to be ambitious of. A good name is more desirable. A man may pass through the world very obscurely and yet very comfortably."—*M. Henry*.

10. I will appoint—This should read, "I have appointed," as it refers to the past, not to the future. A place for my people—The land of Canaan, where they were then settled, and which they held as God's gift. Move no more—As they had moved in the patriarchal age from Canaan to Egypt, and in the Mosaic from Egypt to Canaan. This promise was kept for four hundred years; but why was it not fulfilled forever? Because it depended upon the loyalty of Israel to its God. When the people violated their part of the contract God's justice required their punishment in the loss of their privileges. But God's judgments work in unison with his providence. The seclusion of Israel in Palestine preserved revealed truth unsullied. Their dispersion spread it to the ends of the earth. Neither shall the children of wickedness afflict—This promise was fulfilled according to the measure of Israel's faithfulness to its God. When Israel's sins required discipline and punishment God gave it through hostile nations. As beforetime—"When in the bondage of Egypt."—*Terry*.

Authorized Version.

11 And as ¹²since the time that I commanded judges *to be over my people Is'ra-el*, and have ¹³caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee ¹⁴that he will make thee a house.

12 And ¹⁵when thy days be fulfilled, and thou ¹⁶shalt sleep with thy fathers, ¹⁷I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 ¹⁸He shall build a house for my name,

Revised Version.

11 more, as at the first, and as from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Is'ra-el; and I ¹²will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Moreover the LORD telleth thee that the LORD will make

12 thee an house. When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will estab-

lish his kingdom. He shall build an house

¹² Judg. 2. 14-16; 1 Sam. 12. 9, 11; Psalm 106. 42.—
¹³ Ver. 1.—¹⁴ Exod. 1. 31; ver. 27; 1 Kings 11. 35.—¹⁵ 1 Kings
2. 1.—¹⁶ Dent. 31. 16; 1 Kings 1. 21; Acts 13. 36.—¹⁷ 1 Kings
8. 20; Psalm 132. 11.—¹⁸ 1 Kings 5. 5; 6. 12; 8. 19; 1 Chron. 22.
10; 28. 6.

* Or, have cause.

11. **And as since**—Referring to the oppressions through which the Israelites passed during the period of the judges. **I commanded judges**—"The contrast is that of the troublous, unsettled times of the judges, and the frequent servitudes of Israel in those times, with the settled prosperity and independence of the kingdom of David and Solomon."—*Bishop Hervey*. **Also the Lord telleth thee**—"Or it may be, 'And the Lord hath told thee,' namely, by the mouth of Samuel. The last is rather preferable, as making the use of the third instead of the first person more natural."—*Bishop Hervey*. **Will make thee a house**—David had proposed a house for God; and in refusing it God rewards his purpose with the promise of a house for himself, that is, a permanent possession of the royal authority in his family. - In this promise was also the principle that God must build a man's house before he can build God's house.

II. SOLOMON'S WORK. VERSES 12-16.



12. **When thy days be fulfilled**—"The prophet, having detailed God's past mercies to David, now passes on to direct prophecy, and that one of the most important in the Old Testament."—*Hervey*. **I will set up thy seed**—"First, Solomon, who recognizes the fulfillment of this promise in his elevation to the throne (1 Kings 8. 15-20); the line of David's descendants, who succeeded him on the throne of Judah; and finally Christ, in whom the prophecy reaches its highest fulfillment."—*Cambridge Bible*. **Which shall proceed**—"The seed here spoken of was still in the future when this promise was made to David."—*Erdmann*. "It was customary for the eldest son born after the father's succession to the throne to succeed him in

his dignity as king. David had several sons born after his removal to Jerusalem (chap. 5. 14-16; compare 1 Chron. 3. 5). But by a special ordinance and promise of God his successor was to be a son born after this time; and the departure from the established usage of the East, in fixing the succession, can be accounted for on no other known ground except the fulfillment of the divine promise."—*Jamieson*. **Establish his kingdom**—A promise verified to Solomon, who enjoyed rule over all the lands won by David.

13. **He shall build a house**—"The house which Solomon built continued four hundred years, till the time of the Babylonish exile, when it was burned by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25. 8); but it was rebuilt at the close of the exile (Ezra 6. 15), and of it then the prophet

Authorized Version.

and I will ¹⁹ establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

14 ²⁰ I will be his father, and he shall be my son. ²¹ If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, ²² as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And ²³ thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

Revised Version.

for my name, and I will establish the throne

14 of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever.

¹⁹ Ver. 16; Psalm 89. 4, 29, 36, 37.—²⁰ Psalm 89. 26, 27; Heb. 1. 5.—²¹ Psalm 89. 30-33.—²² 1 Sam. 15. 28, 29; 16. 14; 1 Kings 11. 12, 24.—²³ Ver. 18; Psalm 89. 26, 37; John 12. 34.

Haggai said (Hag. 2. 9), 'The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former;' for this second temple was the connecting link between the Jews of Haggai's time and the Messiah.—*Terry*. **For my name**—"The name of God signifies God himself so far as he has revealed and manifested himself to men. His promise concerning the temple was that he would 'put his name there;' that is, that he would be present and reveal himself there in an especial manner."—*Cambridge Bible*. **Forever**—"The word 'forever,' emphatically twice repeated in verse 16, shows very distinctly that this prophecy looks beyond the succession of the kings of Judah of the house of David, and embraces the throne of the Christ, according to the angel's interpretation as given in Luke 1. 31-33, where the reference to this passage cannot be mistaken."—*Bishop Hervey*. And the title, 'the Son of David,' given to the Messiah in the rabbinical writings, as well as its special application to Jesus in the New Testament, springs mainly from the acknowledged Messianic significance of this prophecy.

14. **I will be his father**—"The relation of fatherhood and sonship will exist between the covenant God of Israel and the seed of David. This denotes, in the first place, the relation of the most cordial mutual love, which attests its enduring character by fidelity, and demonstrates its existence toward the Lord by active obedience."—*Erdmann*. **He shall be my son**—"This was not a promise that David's son would be saved without respect to his own faith or conduct, but that God would deal with him as a wise father, punishing sin, but ever ready to forgive. **If he commit iniquity**—The backsliding of Solomon and of David's descendants in general seems to be foreshadowed by divine omniscience. "The words 'If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him,' etc., supply the illustration of God's dealing with Solomon and his successors as a Father, for 'what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?' (Heb. 12. 5-10; Prov. 3. 12.) The literal translation of the words shows this more clearly: 'And he shall be to me a son, whom if he transgress, I will correct,' etc."—*Bishop Hervey*. **I will chasten him**—"The king's son is not to be exempted from the punishments common to all men who act perversely. In this matter God is no respecter of persons. Accordingly, when Solomon forsook the law of the Lord, he was threatened with bitter and humiliating judgments (1 Kings 11. 9-40)."—*Terry*. **With the rod of men**, etc.—"That is, such a chastisement as men inflict upon their children to correct and reclaim them, not to destroy them."—*Bishop Hervey*.

15. **My mercy shall not depart**—"The contrast is that between the punishment of sin in individuals and the favor that remains permanently with the family, whereby the divine promise becomes an unconditioned one."—*Hengstenberg*. **As I took it from Saul**—"The family of David remained till the incarnation. Joseph and Mary were both of that family; Jesus was the only heir to the kingdom of Israel. But he did not choose to sit on the secular throne; he ascended the spiritual throne, and now he is exalted to the right hand of God, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins."—*Clarke*.

16. **Shall be established forever**—"Forever . . . forever. Of all the words of prom-

ise that fell on David's ears these were the most charming. They find repeated utterances in his prayer (verses 19, 25, 29), often in the Psalms (18. 50 ; 89. 29), and even echo in the angel's words of salutation to the mother of our Lord (Luke 1. 32, 38). By them we see that this message of Nathan to David was largely a Messianic prophecy."—*Terry*. "No earthly kingdom, and no posterity of any single man, has eternal duration like the heaven and the earth ; but the different families of men become extinct as the different earthly kingdoms perish, and other families and kingdoms take their place. The posterity of David, therefore, could only last forever by running out in a person who lives forever ; that is, by culminating in the Messiah, who lives forever, and of whose kingdom there is no end."—*Keil and Delitzsch*.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

Our last lesson showed true worship ; this presents to us **The Privileges of the True Worshiper.**

I. The true worshiper receives divine counsel. Verses 4-7. God gave counsel to David through the prophet ; but our privilege is higher. We may read God's voice in his written word, and may hear it in our own hearts if we live in communion with him.

II. He is under the divine care. Verses 8, 9. God saw David in the sheepcote and on the hillside of Bethlehem. God opened the way before him. God gave him opportunity, power, success. And so will God watch over every follower, and give to him just what is best for him.

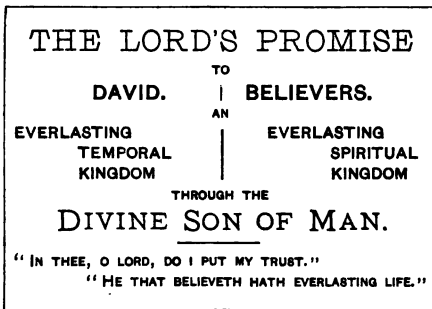
III. He is lifted up to honor. Verse 9. God gave to David "a great name;" but it was because he saw in David that which merited such glory. He who serves God faithfully may not always become famous, but he will surely be honored.

IV. He enjoys peace. Verses 10, 11. He may not always be exempt from trial—David certainly was not ; yet he will enjoy peace and rest and freedom from care ; for he will be lifted above his troubles and stayed upon God.

V. He receives discipline. Verses 12-14. It is not a privilege, but a misfortune, to be free from correction and discipline ; and it is not a misfortune, but a privilege, to receive needed chastisement. Who is the more fortunate, the child who is free to roam the streets at will, or

the child who is carefully nurtured and trained at home? Let us count God's chastening our peculiar blessing.

VI. He enjoys a share in God's covenant mercies. Verses 15, 16. God's covenant is not for one generation, but for ages upon ages. He who worships God gives to his children a better inheritance than earthly treasure, an interest in the everlasting covenant of grace. They will not be saved of necessity through their fathers' faith ; but they start in life with privileges that others do not possess.



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS IV AND V.

1. David's psalm of thanksgiving (2 Sam. 7. 18-29). 2. David subdues the Philistines, Moabites, the king of Zobah, and the Syrians, puts garrisons in Edom, and dedicates the spoil to God (2 Sam. 8. 1-15).

LESSON V.—AUGUST 2.

DAVID'S KINDNESS.—2 SAM. 9. 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.—
Rom. 12. 10.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—About B. C. 1040.

PLACE.—Jerusalem ; Lo-debar.

LESSON HYMN.—

Jesus, my Saviour, Brother, Friend, On whom I cast my every care,
On whom for all things I depend, Inspire, and then accept, my prayer.
If I have tasted of thy grace, The grace that sure salvation brings ;
If with me now thy Spirit stays, And, hovering, hides me in his wings ;
Still let him with my wickedness stay, Not for a moment's space depart ;
Evil and danger turn away, And keep till he renews my heart.—*Charles Wesley.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (July 27), David's Kindness, 2 Sam. 9. *Tuesday*, David and Jonathan, 1 Sam. 20. 11-17. *Wednesday*, A sorrowful parting, 1 Sam. 20. 35-42. *Thursday*, A glad welcome, 2 Sam. 19. 24-30. *Friday*, Constancy in friendship, Prov. 27. 1-10. *Saturday* (August 1), A blessed memory, Job 29. 1-16. *Sunday*, The love of Christ, Eph. 3. 8-19.

Authorized Version.

1 And Da'vid said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may ¹ show him kindness for Jon'a-than's sake ?

Revised Version.

1 And Da'vid said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show

¹ 1 Sam. 18. 3 ; 20. 14-17, 42 ; Prov. 27. 10.

I. LOYAL FRIENDSHIP. VERSES 1-5.



1. **And David said**—This must have been about seven years after David's accession to the throne over all Israel, for Mephibosheth was five years old at the death of Saul, and he was now not less than twenty. "Being but five years old at his father's death (2 Sam. 4. 4), Mephibosheth must have been born during the period of David's wandering, so that it is nothing strange that David had no knowledge of him ; and the incessant cares of his reign had thus far prevented the king's making special inquiry into this matter. Now, in a time of peace, his thoughts go back to the brotherly covenant made between himself and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18. 3 ; 20. 16. 42), and he yearns for opportunity to requite some of the kindness of that noble prince."

—*Terry.* Of the house of Saul—He did not say "of the house of Jonathan," but "of the house of Saul ;" for the sake of his friend's memory he was willing to forget his bitterest foe's persecution. **For Jonathan's sake**—Jonathan, the son of Saul, had shown a chivalrous love for David, sacrificing his father's regard and his own interests in order to save him, willing

Authorized Version.

2 And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name *was* ² Zi'ba. And when they had called him unto Da'vid, the king said unto him, *Art thou* Zi'ba? And he said, Thy servant *is he*.

3 And the king said, *Is there not yet any* of the house of Saul, that I may show the ³ kindness of God unto him? And Zi'ba said unto the king, Jon'a-than hath yet a son, *which is* ⁴ lame on *his* feet.

4 And the king said unto him, Where *is he*? And Zi'ba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of ⁵ Ma'chir, the son of Am'mi-el, in Lo-de-bar.

Revised Version.

2 him kindness for Jon'a-than's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Zi'ba, and they called him unto Da'vid; and the king said unto him, Art thou Zi'ba? And he said, Thy servant ³ is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Zi'ba said unto the king, ¹ Jon'a-than hath

4 yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Zi'ba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Ma'chir the son of Am'mi-el,

² Chap. 16. 1; 19. 17, 29. — ³ 1 Sam. 20. 14. — ⁴ Chap. 4. 4. — ⁵ Chap. 17. 27.

¹ See chap. 4. 4.

even to renounce his right to the throne in his favor. David's gratitude now finds expression fifteen years after Jonathan's death.

GOOD MEN SHOULD SEEK OPPORTUNITIES OF DOING GOOD. "*The liberal soul deviseth liberal things* (Isa. 32. 8). For the most proper objects of our kindness and charity are such as will not be frequently met without inquiry. The most necessitous are the least clamorous."—*M. Henry*.

2. **Of the house of Saul**—Not a descendant of his family, but a member of his household. **A servant**—He had been a slave, but had gained his freedom; slavery among the Israelites was very mild, and opportunities for liberty were easy. The slave was treated as one of the family, and often married into it. Ziba seems to have become a freedman at his master's death, and so well did he improve all advantages that at this time he had himself become the head of a family of fifteen sons and twenty slaves.

3. **The king said**—He inquired of Ziba as one most likely to know concerning Saul's family. **The kindness of God**—An expression capable of, and perhaps combining, several meanings: 1. Such a kindness as David had experienced from God; 2. A kindness for the sake of God, before whom the vow had been made with Jonathan (1 Sam. 20. 42). 3. Some take it to be merely a superlative, "very great kindness," as the words "a mountain of God" meant "a high mountain," etc. **Jonathan hath yet a son**—Jonathan had been slain with his father on Mount Gilboa, but his young child had been saved from the pursuit of the Philistines. **Lame on his feet**—When news came of the slaughter on Mount Gilboa and the coming of the Philistines, the nurse of the child Mephibosheth, who was then five years old, caught him up to flee, but let him fall, so that his feet were badly injured. He had taken no part in the disputes concerning the succession, because of his youth, his helpless condition, his weakness of character, and the fact that in the East the younger son of a monarch takes precedence over the son of a deceased heir apparent, so that his uncle Ishbosheth had been placed upon the throne by Abner. "Mephibosheth's insignificance had led to his being lost sight of, and it was only through Ziba that David learned his existence and the retired life he passed with one of the great families in trans-Jordanic Canaan who remained attached to the fallen dynasty."—*Jamieson*.

4. **Ma'chir**—This was a nobleman, probably of the tribe of Manasseh, who possessed wealth and position. We find that years after this he entertained David in his flight from Absalom (2 Sam. 17. 27), an evidence of his generosity, and also showing that while kind to the fallen house of Saul he was still loyal to David. David himself was aided by the same hands that had aided the son of Jonathan. "When David sent for Mephibosheth from him he little thought that the time would come when he himself would gladly be beholden to him; and perhaps Ma'chir was then the more ready to help David in recompense for his kindness to Mephibosheth."—*M. Henry*. **In Lo-debar**—On the east of Jordan and near Mahanaim; but

Authorized Version.

5 Then king Da'vid sent, and fetched him out of the house of Ma'chir, the son of Am'mi-el, from Lo-de'bar.

6 Now when a Me-phib'o-sheth, the son of Jon'a-than, the son of Saul, was come unto Da'vid, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And Da'vid said, Me-phib'o-sheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7 And Da'vid said unto him, Fear not: ⁶ for I will surely show thee kindness for Jon'a-than thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

Revised Version.

5 in Lo-de'bar. Then king Da'vid sent, and fetched him out of the house of Ma'chir

6 the son of Am'mi-el, from Lo-de'bar. And Me-phib'o-sheth, the son of Jon'a-than, the son of Saul, came unto Da'vid, and fell on his face, and did obeisance. And Da'vid said, Me-phib'o-sheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And Da'vid said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jon'a-than thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the ¹ land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my

^a *Meribbaal*, 1 Chron. 8. 34.—^b Vers. 1, 2.

^c *Heb. field*.

its location is as yet unknown. Here Mephibosheth had been kept in seclusion, his very existence probably remaining a secret, lest the knowledge in those unsettled times might bring harm to his entertainers. It is not remarkable that fifteen years passed before David learned that the son of his friend was still living.

NOTICE ONCE MORE that kindness and mercy are never thrown away, but return in blessings.

5. **King David sent**—The royal command for Mephibosheth to appear at Jerusalem was doubtless received with grave anxiety, for it was usual in oriental countries for a new king to put to death all the family of a rival house, and such kindness as David showed was rare, if not absolutely unknown. "David's psalm on the bringing up of the ark, 'Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord?' (Psalm 24. 3.), shows his own feeling that one of the requisites for so high an honor was that he who was thus favored by God should not '*swear deceitfully*' (Psalm 24. 4); and in the spirit of that psalm he now performs his oath to Saul and Jonathan."—*Wordsworth*.

II. ROYAL GRACE. VERSES 6-13.

6. **Mephibosheth**—"In 1 Chron. 8. 34; 9. 40, he is called *Merib-baal*, and in the latter place also *Meri-baal*, probably by a clerical error. The two names seem to have the same meaning, 'Destroying-shame'; *Bosheth* (Shame) being the equivalent for *Raal*, and *Mephir* ('Scattering' or 'Destroying') being equivalent to *Merib*, 'Contending-with.' Compare Ish-bosheth and Es-baal, Jerub-baal and Jerub-besheth (2 Sam. 11. 21, etc.)."—*Bishop Hervey*. **Was come unto David**—"The picture of David's royal power and glory in contrast with the poor, crippled son of Jonathan, the last scion of Saul's fallen house, comes out in greater splendor the deeper the latter humbles himself before him and trusts himself to his favor. In his noble conduct to Mephibosheth David demonstrates the friendship that he had sworn to Jonathan."—*Erdmann*. **Fell on his face**—Probably he was uncertain as to David's purpose and in fear of his life. How often we see trouble in what the King of heaven intends for a blessing! "David can see neither Saul's blood nor lame legs in Mephibosheth while he sees in him the features of his friend Jonathan; how much less shall the God of mercies regard our infirmities or the corrupt blood of our sinful progenitors while he beholds us in the face of his Son in whom he is well pleased!"—*Bishop Hall*.

7. **Thou shalt eat bread at my table**—"A common mark of honor in oriental countries. See 1 Kings 2. 7; 2 Kings 25. 29. The physician Democedes, who cured Darius, was made 'a member of the king's table;' and Histæus of Miletus was invited to come up to Susa and be Darius's 'mess companion.'"—*Cambridge Bible*. "What more could David do for one incapacitated by his infirmity for the employments of active life? And it was done, not grudgingly, nor with cold reserve, but with the heartfelt tenderness which made him desire to have always near him this living memorial of his lost friend. A less noble mind might have shrunk from

Authorized Version.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such ⁷a dead dog as I am?

9 Then the king called to Zi'ba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, ⁸I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

10 Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Me-phib'o-sheth thy master's son ⁹shall eat bread always at my table. Now Zi'ba had ¹⁰fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then said Zi'ba unto the king, ¹¹According to all that my lord the king hath com-

Revised Version.

8 table continually. And he did obeisance, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? Then the king called to Zi'ba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, All that pertained to Saul and to all his house have I

10 given unto thy master's son. And thou shalt till the land for him, thou, and thy sons, and thy servants; and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have bread to eat: but Me-phib'o-sheth thy master's son shall eat bread always at my table. Now Zi'ba had fifteen sons and 11 twenty servants. Then said Zi'ba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king

⁷ 1 Sam. 24. 14; chap. 16. 9. — ⁸ See chap. 16. 4; 19. 29. — ⁹ Vers. 7, 11, 18; chap. 19. 28. — ¹⁰ Chap. 19. 17. — ¹¹ Chaps. 16. 1, 4; 19. 26.

thus keeping before the public eye, in connection with himself, the true heir of the house of Saul, especially as, though lame himself, Mephibosheth had a son who would eventually inherit whatever claims his father might be supposed to possess. But in the large heart of David there was found no room for such low suspicions and mean misgivings. God had promised to perpetuate the royal power in his house; and what had he to fear? Mephibosheth was the son of his heart's friend; what could he suspect?"—*Kittó*.

8. He bowed himself—The misfortunes of Mephibosheth had humbled him, and perhaps made his character somewhat weak and lacking in manliness of manner. **A dead dog**—The ownerless dogs of an oriental city, cowardly and vile, are natural illustrations of contempt, and "a dead dog" is the deepest depth of degradation.

9. I have given—In most oriental kingdoms the monarch is regarded as supreme owner of all the property of his subjects, and takes and bestows estates at his will; but in Israel not even the king could take an inheritance out of a family line. **Thy master's son**—Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, here named as his son. **All that pertained to Saul**—"Saul's family estate, which had fallen to David in right of his wife (Num. 27. 8), or been forfeited to the crown by Ishbosheth's rebellion (2 Sam. 12. 8), was provided (verse 11, also 2 Sam. 19. 29) for enabling him to maintain an establishment suitable to his rank, and Ziba appointed steward to manage it, on the condition of receiving one half of the produce in remuneration of his labor and expense, while the other portion was to be paid as rent to the owner of the land (2 Sam. 19. 29)."—*Jamieson*.

10. Thou . . . shalt till the land—"This arrangement suggests that Ziba was already in occupation of the lands of Saul."—*Cambridge Bible*. **That thy master's son may have food**—"Although Mephibosheth himself ate daily as a guest at the king's table, he had to make provision, as a royal prince, for the maintenance of his own family and servants, as he had children, according to verse 12 and 1 Chron. 8. 34."—*Keil and Delitzsch*. **Fifteen sons**—It is probable that Ziba had more than one wife, showing that the sometime slave had now risen to wealth and social position. **Twenty servants**—All of whom would now become the servants of Mephibosheth. Ziba was a crafty man, watching for his own interests, as he showed afterward by bringing accusation against his master during the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. 16. 1-4; 19. 24-30).

11. Then said Ziba—Ziba submitted to the royal command, though doubtless with inward unwillingness at being remanded from the position of a proprietor back to that of a servant. Ziba's relation to this event suggests, as we have seen, that perhaps he had taken possession of Saul's estates in the confusion of the revolution, and afterward had been permitted to hold

Authorized Version.

manded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Me-phib'o-sheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12 And Me-phib'o-sheth had a young son, ¹² whose name was Mi'cha. And all that dwelt in the house of Zi'ba were servants unto Me-phib'o-sheth.

13 So Me-phib'o-sheth dwelt in Je-ru'sa-lem: ¹³ for he did eat continually at the king's table; and ¹⁴ was lame on both his feet.

Revised Version.

commandeth his servant, so shall thy servant do. ⁸ As for Me-phib'o-sheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of

12 the king's sons. And Me-phib'o-sheth had a young son, whose name was Mi'ca. And all that dwelt in the house of Zi'ba were 13 servants unto Me-phib'o-sheth. So Me-phib'o-sheth dwelt in Je-ru'sa-lem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and he was lame on both his feet.

¹² 1 Chron. 8. 34.—¹³ Vers. 7, 1.—¹⁴ Ver. 3.

⁸ Or, *But Mephibosheth eateth, etc.*

them, it may be paying rental to David as the successor of Saul. At the time of Absalom's conspiracy Ziba managed to convey the impression that he remained loyal and that Mephibosheth had joined the rebellion. His accusation against his master was probably false, though if it were wholly so it is difficult to see why David should have permitted Ziba to retain half of a property which was another's, whom he had robbed by false accusation. Compare 2 Sam. 16. 1-4 and 19. 24-30. **As for Mephibosheth**—The scholars say that this clause should read, "So Mephibosheth did eat at David's table, as one of the king's sons." **Eat at my table**—**"As men do not sit down at table with their wives and children in the East, this constant dining at court is a distinction unaccompanied by any of the drawbacks it would bring to us."**—*Kitto*. Nor does the phrase necessarily mean that they dined together.

12. A young son . . . Micha—Through whom the house of Saul was perpetuated and greatly increased, and continued down to the captivity.

13. Dwelt in Jerusalem—He seems to have remained loyal to David through all the temptations of Absalom's rebellion, though greatly belied by his servant, who, with oriental cunning, managed to rob him of half his estate. **And was lame**—"This is repeated again from verse 3, probably because the future incidents of Mephibosheth's life (2 Sam. 16. 1-4; 19. 24-30) turn upon his lameness."—*Bishop Hervey*.

Illustration 207. There is a curious Russian fable which relates how all the virtues were once invited to an entertainment. In the course of the evening the host noticed two beautiful ladies who appeared to be unacquainted one with the other. He accordingly introduced them thus, "Benevolence—Gratitude; Gratitude—Benevolence." They were delighted to make one another's acquaintance, having never met before. The satire contained in this fable is striking, but not of universal application. Earthly benevolence has met with gratitude, although too rarely. There is a fine instance of it in the passage for to-day, from which we may learn more than one valuable moral lesson.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

Occasionally in our lessons it is well to present not the historical view, but the spiritual suggestions of the subject. This lesson presents **A Series of Pictures Showing Salvation.**

I. See in David a picture of the Sa-

viour. 1. In his own royal state and power he thinks of the lowly and the helpless. So Christ thought not of himself, but of the needy world. 2. He seeks out his enemies and offers them pardon and favor (verse 3). He does not inquire for "the house of Jonathan," but for "the house of Saul." So Christ seeks sinners, with promise of mercy. 3. He gives royal gifts—home to the exile; riches to the needy; a palace to the homeless; a princely fellowship to the lowly; power and rank to the beggar.

FULFILLING THE LAW.

FREELY YE
HAVE RECEIVED | SHALL GIVE.
THE LAW OF LOVE
EXEMPLIFIED
BY
DEEDS OF KINDNESS.

"BE KINDLY AFFECTIONED ONE TO ANOTHER."

II. See in Mephibosheth a picture of the saved sinner. 1. *His condition as representative of the sinner.* (1.) He belonged to a ruined race—the house of Saul. (2.) He was in poverty and exile. (3.) He was in helpless condition—"lame in his feet," with no power in himself. (4.) He was in terror and alarmed, afraid lest his life might be taken. How like an unsaved man is all this! 2. *His conduct as representative of the seeker.* (1.) He showed obedience; when David called he came. (2.) He showed humility, coming to David in a lowly manner, and not with the assurance of self-righteousness. (3.) He believed David's promise, and accepted David's bounty with promptness, and did not hold himself aloof in pride. (4.) He showed steadfast loyalty, as the later history relates, especially during Absalom's rebellion. 3. *His privileges as representative of the saved man.* (1.) He found a royal home in the palace. (2.) He received as a gift an abundant inheritance, and was made rich. (3.) He was adopted into the royal family as a son of the king. (4.) He enjoyed a princely fellowship at the royal table. All these—home, inheritance, adoption, fellowship—are the privileges of Christians.



LESSON VI.—AUGUST 9.

DAVID'S VICTORIES.—2 SAM. 10. 8-19.

[Read chapters 8 and 10.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?—Psalm 27. 1.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Perhaps B. C. 1034.

PLACES.—1. *Rabbath* or Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites. 2. *A district of level downs*, or plain surrounding the fortified city of Medeba. The plain was inhabited by Reubenites: the city belonged originally to the Moabites, and afterward fell into their hands. 3. *Hamath*, a Syrian metropolis, not far from Damascus.

ENVIRONMENTS OF THIS LESSON.—Chapters 8 and 10 of Second Samuel should be read. David's probation, first as an outlaw, then as king over the tribe of Judah, had been long and hard; but when recognition as monarch of the united people was at last secured these trials were past and the summit of earthly glory seemed within reach. His elevation to the throne made his reputation as prophet and poet more illustrious. He found the religion of his people in ruins and tatters; he restored, enriched, and enlarged the worship of the sanctuary. The principalities and kingdoms about him had in earlier years ruled Israel with tyrannous hand, but now the tables were turned. David had a standing army of experienced soldiers, and generals of unrivaled ability, and it was comparatively easy for him now to extend his empire from the edge of Egypt to the Euphrates. He does not seem, however, to have made war on any of his rivals without just cause, and in most cases the war was begun by his enemies. Always David's wars were the wars of the Lord. He identified his cause with the cause of goodness and truth; and wherever his sway was extended foul idolatries and the rule of brute force were swept aside and a reverent and enlightened government set up in their stead. The war with the king of Ammon was brought on by an abominable affront, greatly aggravated by the kindly disposition of David toward the son of his old friend. King Hanun must have supposed himself well able to cope with David, or he would not have precipitated such a war; but he soon learned that his resources would be taxed to their utmost. For five hundred thousand pounds' weight of silver (1 Chron. 19. 6)—a vast sum when we consider the great relative value of silver in those days—he hired mercenaries from Aram, ancient Syria, and an army of thirty-three thousand men soon confronted David's force. Joab was in command of the Israelites.

LESSON HYMN.—

Fear not, be strong! your cause belongs 'To him who can avenge your wrongs; Leave all to him,
your Lord:

Though hidden yet from mortal eyes, Salvation shall for you arise; He girdeth on his sword!
As true as God's own promise stands, Not earth nor hell with all their bands Against us shall
prevail;

The Lord shall mock them from his throne; God is with us; we are his own; Our victory cannot
fail!—*Gustavus Adolphus, in prose. Jacob Fabricius. Tr. by Miss C. Winkworth.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (August 3), David's Victories, 2 Sam. 10. 8-19. *Tuesday*, A song of victory, Exod. 15. 1-11. *Wednesday*, Divine preservation, 1 Chron. 18. 1-13. *Thursday*, Trust in God, Psalm 144. *Friday*, Deliverance from God, Psalm 18. 32-50. *Saturday*, Praise for deliverance, Psalm 34. *Sunday*, The soul's warfare, Eph. 6. 10-20.

Authorized Version.

8 And the children of Am'mon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and ¹the Syr'i-ans of Zo'ba, and of Re'hob, and Ish'tob, and Ma'a-cah, were by themselves in the field.

Revised Version.

8 And the children of Am'mon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syr'i-ans of Zo'bah, and of Re'hob, and the men of Tob and Ma'a-cah, were by themselves in the

1 Ver. 6.

I. THE LORD'S BATTLE AGAINST AMMON. VERSES 8-14.

8. **The children of Ammon came out**—Marched out of Rabbath, their capital city (Deut. 3. 11). **This was very near to the border line of Israel.** **Put the battle in array**—Not daring to



AMMÂN (RABBATH).

advance into hostile territory, they took an advantageous position and awaited attack. Their king had evidently brought on the war before he was ready for it. **At the entering in of the gate**—That is, the gate of Rabbath. **The Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah**—These were four districts of Aram or Syria, whose king, like the Hessian monarch in the days of our American Revolution, seems to have maintained an organized force of desperadoes to hire out to neighboring sovereigns. For Ishtob we should read "men of Tob." **Were by themselves in the field**—Rapidly as they had marched, they had not been able to form a junction with the Ammonites before Joab appeared. If King Hanun had been as energetic as he was rash, his own troops would have been as alert as these foreign mercenaries;

Authorized Version.

9 When Jo'ab saw that ²the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice *men* of Is'ra-el, and put *them* in array against the Syr'i-ans:

10 And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Ab-i-sha'i his brother, that he might put *them* in array against the children of Am'mon.

11 And he said, ³If the Syr'i-ans be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Am'mon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

Revised Version.

9 field. Now when Jo'ab saw that ¹the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Is'ra-el, and put them in array against the 10 Syr'i-ans: and the rest of the people he committed into the hand of ²Ab-i-sha'i his brother, and he put them in array against

11 the children of Am'mon. And he said, If the Syr'i-ans be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Am'mon be too strong for thee, then I will

² Josh. 8. 21, 22; Judg. 20. 42, 43. — ³ 1 Chron. 19. 9, 12.

¹ Heb. *the face of the battle was against.* — ² Heb. *Abshai.*

but the Ammonite army had barely got outside of the gate of Rabbath. Still, Joab was evidently only just in time to prevent a junction of the two armies. "In the field" means, as we learn elsewhere, in the treeless prairie that surrounds Medeba. This was an Israelite town, of the tribe of Reuben—one of the towns which had been conquered from King Sihon by Joshua (Num. 21. 30). It had probably been turned into a strong fortress, and neither army was safe while the other held it.

FRIENDSHIP MISINTERPRETED. It is sad that in this world so much of friendship is ill requited. 1. Some people injure their best friends as a result of the suspicious spirit which experience in this world so often tends to produce. Men find to be evil so many that at first appear to be good that they become quick to think the worst of all. 2. Some without distinct consciousness become blind to the good of others, because they see so plainly certain evils in themselves. 3. Enmity is frequently a cause of ingratitude and injustice. If we cherish ill will toward others we are ready to think evil of them. Prejudice springs up early. 4. Fear. No matter how good a man has been to you, when you begin to fear him you are ready to hate him.

9. **The front of the battle was against him before and behind**—Joab took all hazards, and marched straight against the two armies which faced each other. The Ammonites had their great city behind them; the Syrians had a splendid plain about them in which their numerous chariots could be skillfully maneuvered. If Joab advanced against either he would have the other in his rear; but evidently he felt that his greatest danger was from the Syrians. They were the best soldiers; if they were permitted to connect their forces with the men of Rabbath that would end all hopes of a Hebrew victory. **The choice men of Israel**—The most experienced fighters, the most powerful men, the best caparisoned. All these facts would be of prime importance at the time when a battle was a series of hand-to-hand encounters. **The Syrians**—Whom he dreaded most.

10. **Abishai his brother**—Abishai was the eldest of the three sons of Zeruiah, David's sister, and was therefore brother to Joab and Asahel. He was, like his brothers, a devoted follower of David, a man of strong principle, and in the later days when Absalom rebelled he remained thoroughly loyal. His personal prowess had been shown on many occasions, as when once he rescued David from the hands of a gigantic Philistine, Ishbi-benob, and on another occasion when, single-handed, he fought against three hundred. He was "captain of the second three" of David's mighty men.

11. The astute mind of Joab grasped the full danger of his situation. The plan he laid was the best that could be laid in the desperate circumstances; but both Abishai and Joab must have known that it would be an exceedingly hazardous plan to carry out, for if Joab's assault on the Syrian mercenaries should prove unsuccessful Abishai could hardly turn from the Ammonites with whom he was fighting without ruining his entire division of the army.

THREE DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS. Those who fight in the moral army of God often find them-

Authorized Version.

12 ⁴ Be of good courage, and let us ⁵ play the men for our people, and for the cities of

Revised Version.

12 come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and

⁴ Deut. 31. 6.—⁵ 1 Sam. 4. 9; 1 Cor. 16. 13.

selves confronted by perils as great as those which now confronted Joab. His words, desperate as they are, indicate a clear recognition of what was at stake. Each individual Christian has special duties incumbent upon him, and each division of the Christian army has its peculiar duties also. Our first duty as Christians is, 1. To extend mutual help. All denominations should cheerfully cooperate and help each other. No individual or section can do good without helping others. 2. Courage. More defeats are sustained by God's forces be-



HUNIN (BETH-REHOB).

cause of lack of courage than from any other cause. We should remember that we are struggling so that the kingdom of God may come; we should feel that we are loyally fighting for the people and the cities of God. Our King's eye is upon us; he overlooks no true soldier. If we suffer we shall also reign with him. Let us be of good courage and "play the man." 3. Resignation. When a man is fighting in a good cause, and knows that it is his duty to fight, the question concerning the getting of victory becomes secondary; "the battle is not to the strong" (Eccles. 9. 11). We will in fighting have God near just as really when we fail as when we conquer. "Thy saints in all this glorious war shall conquer, though they die." "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

12. Be of good courage—Compare 1 Sam. 4. 9. The two leaders needed extraordinary bravery, for few armies could be long held in such a perilous position as the Israelites had marched into. **Let us play the men**—For this phrase and the one before it if we had a literal translation we would read, "Be strong, and let us show ourselves strong." **For our people, and for the cities of our God**—They were fighting, in a general sense, for their nation, which had been for generations, until the time of Saul and David and Joab, overrun by the cruel chieftains of the surrounding tribes; but in a more special sense they were fighting for the city of Medeba, which we have mentioned in our note under verse 8. It was still in the possession of the Reubenites, but it was besieged by the Syrians; and if the Israelite army were defeated it would fall into the power of the heathen people, and the cruel and wicked rites of Moloch would take the place of the quiet and pure worship of Jehovah. Every noble motive of life, love of right, love of country, love of family, and self-love, urged these men to unusual valor. **The**

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
our God: and ⁶ the LORD do that which seemeth him good.	for the cities of our God: and the LORD do
13 And Jo'ab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syr'i-ans: and they fled before him.	13 that which seemeth him good. So Jo'ab and the people that were with him drew nigh unto the battle against the Syr'i-ans:
14 And when the children of Am'mon saw that the Syr'i-ans were fled, then fled they also before Ab-i-sha'i, and entered into the city. So Jo'ab returned from the children of Am'mon, and came to Je-ru'sa-lem.	14 and they fled before him. And when the children of Am'mon saw that the Syr'i-ans were fled, they likewise fled before Ab-i-sha'i, and entered into the city. Then Jo'ab returned from the children of Am'mon, and came to Je-ru'sa-lem.
15 And when the Syr'i-ans saw that they were smitten before Is'ra-el, they gathered themselves together.	15 mon, and came to Je-ru'sa-lem. And when the Syr'i-ans saw that they were put to the worse before Is'ra-el, they gathered themselves together.
16 And Had-a-re'zer sent, and brought out	16 selves together. And ³ Had-a-re'zer sent,
2 1 Sam. 3. 18; Job 1. 21.	3 In chap. 8. 3, <i>Hadadezer</i> .

Lord do that which seemeth him good—These are not words of high confidence; they are, rather, words of desperate resolution. Whatever the Lord might do, these men were bound to fight to the last. David's throne was in peril that morning.

13, 14. Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him—They marched boldly up against the Syrian foe. **They fled before him**—The text does not describe an immediate panic, but in the fierce shock of the battle the Syrians first gave way. **When the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled**—If any scholar wonders how the children of Ammon could see this it can be pleasingly illustrated by almost any veteran of the war, who can tell how on different occasions such news has rapidly run through great armies—news of victory or of defeat. **Then fled they also**—Abishai had been unable to turn the tide of battle until the news of the Syrian defeat had broken the spirit of the Ammonites. It must be remembered, however, that Joab had the flower of Israel's army with him. **Joab returned**—It may seem strange that Joab did not follow up his victory. Energetic spirits such as his are well able to push triumph to its utmost; but we must remember that ancient warfare was limited by different laws from those which now prevail. This battle was fought late in the year (2 Sam. 11. 1), and fall and winter in Palestine made campaigning impossible. Rabbath was too strong a city to be captured by a sudden assault, and as the whole army of the Ammonites was posted in and around it, a long siege was Joab's only recourse. This was necessarily for the present postponed.

II. THE LORD'S BATTLE AGAINST SYRIA. VERSES 15-19.

15. But while it was not politic to immediately follow up the victory over the Ammonites, it soon became necessary to fight the Syrians again. There was a great difference between the two armies; the Ammonites being, like the earlier Hebrew hosts, made up of the male population, most of them not accustomed to battle. But the Syrian mercenaries were what in modern phraseology would be called regulars, and their soldierly habits led them to re-form after their defeat almost as quickly as a battalion of Blücher's. **When the Syrians saw**—When their generals had succeeded in reorganizing their forces, and the extent of the damage could be measured. **They gathered themselves together**—It is probable that Joab's furious onslaught had broken the lines of the Syrians early in the battle; they were routed, but not destroyed; and when he had returned in triumph to Jerusalem there was little difficulty in gathering the bands of fugitives together. Soon the force was as formidable as before.

16. Hadarezer—The name is spelled Hadadezer in 2 Sam. 8. 3. Hadad is the name of the Syrian sun god. Hadar was the personal name of this sovereign, as the cuneiform inscriptions show. Hadarezer was an energetic sovereign. He had inherited from Rehob, his

Authorized Version.

the Syr'i-ans that *were* beyond ^a the river; and they came to He'lam: and ^b Sho'bach the captain of the host of Had-a-re'zer *went* before them.

17 And when it was told Da'vid, he gathered all Is'ra-el together, and passed over Jor'dan, and came to He'lam. And the Syr'i-ans set themselves in array against Da'vid, and fought with him.

18 And the Syr'i-ans fled before Is'ra-el; and Da'vid slew *the men of* seven hundred chariots of the Syr'i-ans, and forty thousand

Revised Version.

and brought out the Syr'i-ans that were beyond the River: and they came to He'lam, with Sho'bach the captain of the host of

17 Had-a-re'zer at their head. And it was told Da'vid; and he gathered all Is'ra-el together, and passed over Jor'dan, and came to He'lam. And the Syr'i-ans set themselves in array against Da'vid, and

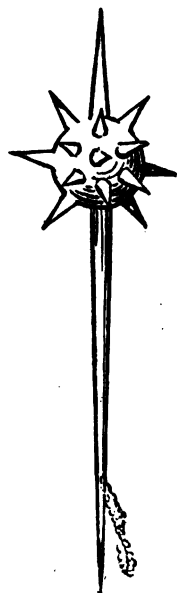
18 fought with him. And the Syr'i-ans fled before Is'ra-el; and Da'vid slew of the Syr'i-ans *the men of* seven hundred char-

^a That is, *Euphrates*.—^b Or, *Shophach*, 1 Chron. 19. 16.

father, the principality of Zobah, northeast of Damascus and south of Hamath, in the region of the Orontes and the Euphrates. It was a powerless country in Saul's day; but Hādar had made himself supreme, extended his authority across the river into Mesopotamia, crushed his rivals at home, and established his dominion far along the Euphrates. David had already encountered and checked the advances of this powerful sovereign; and this defeat of the soldiers whom he had rented out to the king of Ammon forced Hadarezer to declare a Syrian war against David. He was paramount king in Aram, and the defeat of his men would make this war a national affair. **Helam**—No such place is known. Perhaps the phrase should be translated "the army" or "force:" "they came in full force." **Syrians that were beyond the river**—Beyond the Euphrates. These were doubtless vassals and tributaries of Hadarezer. **Shobach**—Hadarezer's chief general. In 1 Chron. 19. 16-18 he is called Shophach. This battle was probably fought in B. C. 1034.

17. **When it was told David**—The movements of both the Ammonites and the Syrians would be closely watched by Israel after such a victory had been achieved over them. **He gathered all Israel together**—Some have supposed that David was dissatisfied with the risk that Joab had run at Medeba; but this is not likely. Both David and Joab were men of great military genius. On an occasion of this sort, when the very life of the nation was imperiled, when the two great military forces of the time were preparing for a final duel, it would have been unbecoming for the king to have shirked the war and have stayed at home. **Fought with him**—We learn from 1 Chron. 18. 3 that this second battle was in Hamath.

18. **The Syrians fled before Israel**—This defeat, following the other, broke the power of the Syrians. **The men of seven hundred chariots**—The word for chariot may mean any vehicle or animal for riding. Concerning the numbers that David slew there is no certainty. Before the Arabs invented our present system of notation there was no method of representing numbers with any likelihood of escaping error. The Hebrews used their letters for numerals, but after four hundred their system breaks down, and any number higher than that is usually represented by a long sum in arithmetic, or by such a strange system of points above and below the lines that confusion is unavoidable. The figures in this verse are seven hundred chariots, with their charioteers, and forty thousand horsemen; but in 2 Sam. 8. 4 we have seventeen hundred horsemen and twenty thousand footmen; while in 1 Chron. 19. 18 we have seven thousand chariots and charioteers and forty thousand footmen. It is impossible to reconcile these conflicting numbers, but those who follow the question closely may find the more probable



A MACE.

Authorized Version.

¹ horsemen, and smote Sho'bach the captain of their host, who died there.

19 And when all the kings *that were servants* to Had-a-re'zer saw that they were smitten before Is'ra-el, they made peace with Is'ra-el, and ² served them. So the Syr'i-ans feared to help the children of Am'mon any more.

Revised Version.

iots, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Sho'bach the captain of their host, 19 that he died there. And when all the kings that were servants to Had-a-re'zer saw that they were put to the worse before Is'ra-el, they made peace with Is'ra-el, and served them. So the Syr'i-ans feared to help the children of Am'mon any more.

¹ 1 Chron. 19. 18, *footmen*.—² Chap. 8. 6.

numbers in 2 Sam. 8. 4; for David had no cavalry. **Shobach the captain of their host, who died there**—And doubtless his death was such a blow to the Syrian cause as the death of Robert E. Lee would have been to the Confederacy, or Ulysses S. Grant to the Union, if either had died at the very climax of the civil war.

19. **The kings that were servants**—The vassal kings. This gives us an idea of the great power of Hadarezer, and consequently of the strength of Israel. The wars with Damascus and Edom mentioned in 2 Sam. 8. 5, 13, probably followed immediately upon Hadarezer's defeat.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

We find in this history some valuable lessons concerning **The Church Militant**.

I. **The Church of God stands surrounded by a hostile world.** Verse 8. Like David's little army, God's people find the whole world in arms against them. Sinners of every kind, however varied their characters, will unite against God's cause. Herod, Pilate, and the Sanhedrin hated each other, but all hated Christ more. The world is the enemy of God's people.

II. **The Church's warfare requires able leadership.** Verse 9. The ancient's said, "An army of deer commanded by a lion is better than an army of lions commanded by a deer." What mighty results are obtained when a Wesley, an Asbury, or a General Booth plans the campaign of the Church militant!

III. **The best men are needed in the hardest places.** Verses 9, 10. Joab and the choice men of his army went to the point of greatest danger. For the mission work abroad, for the frontier work at home, and for mission churches in our great cities, we must have the ablest preachers and most energetic preachers and workers.

IV. **The warfare of the Church requires unity of plan and helpfulness of spirit.** Verse 11. Joab helped Abishai and Abishai helped Joab. How much better that was than for Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians to work in rivalry and opposition while their common enemy surrounds both!

V. **The warriors need faith in God.** Verse 12. If a soldier can realize that his commander's eye is on him he will fight the more vigorously. Our God looks upon him; "let us play the men" for his cause. Said Napoleon at the battle of the Pyramids, "Forty centuries look down upon you."

VI. **Victory must follow victory.** Verses 13-19. One battle was not enough to settle David's war. Some wars are ended with one great battle, as Waterloo, Sadowa, Sedan; but our contest must be always maintained. Satan's army is being perpetually reorganized; he has a new front at every period. One victory at the polls will not put down the liquor traffic. The Church overcomes one class of enemies in one campaign, but it will have to meet many more before the final triumph.

LIGHT AND SALVATION.

THE LORD

MY

LIGHT.

SALVATION.

LEADING ME.

SHIELDING ME.

"WHOM SHALL I FEAR?"

LESSON VII.—AUGUST 16.

DAVID'S CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS.—PSALM 32. 1-11.

[Read also Psalm 51.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.—Psalm 51. 10.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE PSALMS.—Our Lesson Committee has very fittingly assumed that this psalm was composed by David after Nathan had convicted him of unspeakable meanness and cruelty, and the heavy cloud that had been gathering for a whole year of misery broke in a torrent of tears. How far such an assumption is in accordance with present knowledge is a question none but an advanced scholar can answer, and that only for himself. Criticism just now is running strongly in favor of two propositions, which will probably be much toned down by time: 1. That very many of the psalms were written during and after the exile; 2. That the individual singers are generally to be understood as speaking in the name of their people and not for themselves. It is too early to anticipate the net result of these controversies, but one can hardly doubt that, like most theories, these have been first presented in far too extreme a form. Dependence should not be placed on the titles, which are traditional, late, and untrustworthy. Meanwhile, even if Psalm 32 had far less claim than it has to be regarded as David's own composition, its fitness to his history is very clear, and we may without misgiving use it to set forth the soul history of that painful event which darkened the great king's life.

HOW TO STUDY THE PSALMS.—Those who wish for nothing but an English devotional classic may be left to persuade themselves that they are listening to a Hebrew saint. But those who prefer the real David will do well to discard what is familiar, and study some more vigorous and literal version. The Revised Version is unfortunately too conservative, but a psalter like *De Wette's* will constantly let in fresh light where familiarity has obscured the lack of clear meaning.

THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS.—This is one of the so-called penitential psalms, the others being Psalms 6, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143. It is generally believed to have reference to the great sin of David's life (see 1 Kings 15. 5), and to be designed to extol the mercy of God in granting him forgiveness. In that case it had a notable relationship with Psalm 51, in which we read the earnest pleadings of a broken and contrite heart, acknowledging terrible guilt, confessing bloodguiltiness, and praying for mercy and pardon. When Nathan convicted David of his sin the king did not deny, but confessed his deep guilt, and cried out, "I have sinned against Jehovah" (2 Sam. 12. 13). Psalm 51 is but an expansion of these words. Then Nathan responded, "Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." Psalm 32 is assumed to be David's celebration of that most gracious act of Jehovah.

"MASCHIL."—Psalm 32 is designated as a "Maschil," a term which is found at the head of twelve other psalms. It is commonly supposed to mean a "didactic poem," a composition designed to give instruction. But other psalms not so designated appear to be equally well adapted to give instruction. *Ewald* thinks the word denotes the skillful and artistic manner in which these psalms were to be recited. *De Wette* explains it as an intricate, figurative discourse. But no one can now tell with certainty its precise meaning.

"SELAH."—This phrase, the meaning of which no one can be sure of, occurs three times in this psalm. It and similar phrases are probably ancient technical terms for pauses, melodies, or instruments with which the psalm was to be sung. They are incidental evidences

of the great antiquity of these poems, their exact import being manifestly unknown to the Septuagint translators some two centuries before Christ.

ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.—After the civil war Confederate officers were restored to citizenship by taking an oath of allegiance; that is, the United States government declared certain of their rights and privileges forfeited, but offered to restore those rights and privileges when they promised loyalty. God does the same thing, only that the loyalty he demands is not formal; it is loyalty of heart. It is an odd fact that by constant theologic use the word "faith" has changed its meaning. Hopeful still means full of hope; joyful means full of joy; beautiful means full of beauty; but you would hardly say that faithful means full of faith. And yet it does mean precisely that. The only faith that justifies is loyalty, steadfast adherence to God. It includes penitence, belief, bravery, love, everything that is demanded of a loyal adherent; and without this sort of faith it is impossible to please God. Determine solemnly, by the help of God, to be loyal to him; draw on him for strength to do right; trust him fully, and you are "justified by faith."

LESSON HYMN.—

My God, my God, to thee I cry; Thee only would I know;
Thy purifying blood apply, And wash me white as snow.
Touch me, and make the leper clean; Purge my iniquity:
Unless thou wash my soul from sin, I have no part in thee.
But art thou not already mine? Answer, if mine thou art;
Whisper within, thou Love divine, And cheer my drooping heart.—*Charles Wesley.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (August 10), David's Confession and Forgiveness, Psalm 32. *Tuesday*, The sinful nature, Rom. 7. 14-25. *Wednesday*, Hope for the penitent, Joel 2. 12-19. *Thursday*, Confession of sin, Ezra 9. 5-15. *Friday*, Prayer for forgiveness, Psalm 51. 7-19. *Saturday*, Cleansing, Ezek. 36. 22-31. *Sunday*, Praise for pardon, Psalm 103. 1-18.

Authorized Version.

1 Blessed is *he* whose ¹ transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Revised Version.

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

¹ Psalm 85. 2; Rom. 4. 6-8.

I. CONFESSION OF SIN. VERSES 1-5.

1, 2. Blessed—In the Hebrew this word is plural and an exclamation, thus: "O, the blessednesses!" or, as *Spurgeon* paraphrases it, "O, the bundles of happiness! the mountain ranges of delight!" Such an exclamation fitly comes after such an assurance as that of 2 Sam. 12. 18. Only the forgiven man can know the manifold hatefulness of sin and the manifold delights of pardon. The phraseology of the verse is throughout wonderfully suggestive as to the nature of sin and of pardon. If the word for **forgiven** were translated as closely as is the word for **covered** we should read "lifted." From the weary back of the returning transgressor a heavy burden has been lifted; and the shame of the sinner has been covered, put out of sight. The word translated **transgression** carries with it in Hebrew usage the idea of revolt—*moral apostasy*. The word for **sin** means the missing of a mark—*moral failure*. The word for **iniquity** is related to the idea of distortion—*moral perversity*. "This threefold designation seems to be borrowed from Exod. 34. 7, where the doctrine of forgiveness is first fully and explicitly propounded."—*J. A. Alexander*. **Imputeth not**—"Reckoneth not." God's mercy refuses to "reckon" the sins against the penitent sinner. He is treated as if he had no guilt. *Aben-Ezra* (the "Rabbi ben Ezra" of *Robert Browning*) makes a beautiful paraphrase here, "of whose sins the Lord does not think." The psalmist goes on to show that the forgiveness followed on confession, not on good works, and was therefore due to God's bounty alone. Study carefully Paul's explanation of this verse and the next in Rom. 4.

Authorized Version.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD² imputeth not iniquity, and³ in whose spirit there is no guile.

3⁴ When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy⁵ hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Se'lah.

Revised Version.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old
Through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:

My moisture was changed^{1a} with the drought of summer. [Se'lah

² 2 Cor. 5. 19. —³ John 1. 47. —⁴ Prov. 28. 12; Jer. 21. 18, 19.
—⁵ 1 Sam. 5. 6, 11; Job 28. 7; Psalm 38. 2.

¹ Or, into.

In whose spirit there is no guile—Compare John 1. 47. We must not say, "I have not sinned," but must remember, with confiding humility, that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." The "natural heart," "deceitful above all things," is not "blessed." Without absolute sincerity there can be no pardon.

Illustration 208. "Covered." *Menochius* thinks that this word alludes to the manner of writing among the ancient Hebrews. He supposes them, like the later Romans, to have written with a pencil upon wax spread upon tables. When they chose to erase they took a fresh piece of wax, and, drawing it over the writing, covered the former letters."—*Charnock*.

Illustration 209. That sin which has pursued you inexorably for months, filling you with apprehension, giving you no rest, shall be covered as completely by the Lord's pardon as the Egyptian army was covered by the waters of the Red Sea—covered, wiped out, dead—while you stand singing, "Jehovah hath triumphed; his people are free!"

3. Kept silence—Silent before God, as we shall presently see, but not silent to himself—one long and weary endeavor to silence conscience, while the psalmist proves the hollowness of all excuses which would midgate the horror of his crime. Many secrets may be smothered in a heart's dark corners, but not sin. **Bones waxed old**—"The bones stand here for the framework of the body, in which physical strength resides."—*Alexander*. His guilty secret wears away his life's foundations, wastes the springs of his vitality. **Roaring**—He could stifle the cry of penitence, but not the cry of remorse. The chained lion, kept in the royal gardens, whose deep plaintive appeal he heard **all the day long**, seemed to be an apt figure of his own poor spirit, fettered by memory in the very midst of God's sunniest gardens. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" "What shall I do to be saved?"

4. For—Here is the cause of the psalmist's "roaring," the source of all his suffering. **Day and night**—Without holiday, without sleep. **Thy hand was heavy upon me**—Crushing the poor guilty soul by the weight of terrible conviction. And yet this was the very Hand that proved to be so gentle when it assumed flesh and blood; the Hand that rested on the brow of the leper and brought healing to his rotten frame; the Hand that lifted little children to receive a smiling blessing; the Hand that passed through Galilee, Samaria, and Judea with currents of love and power flowing from its finger tips—sight for the blind, hearing for the deaf, healing for the fever-stricken, life for the dead; the Hand that reached out in beckoning, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" the Hand that bended over in benediction, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you;" the Hand that was pierced with nails on Calvary for your sins, reader, and for mine. Gentle, loving Hand! Why wast thou, then, so heavy on David? **FOR LOVE'S SAKE**. All God's wrath—in this world at all events—is surgical. Without this "heaviness" David could never have enjoyed the "blessednesses." **My moisture**—The ancients had no such knowledge of the interior of the human body as modern physiology has revealed to us. This was bad for their health, perhaps, but certainly it was good for their poetry; for from their lack of information we have inherited many rich rhetorical figures. Put blood and chyle and chyme, and all other prosaic accuracies, out of your mind for the moment, and think of the man who flourishes by the blessing of God as like to a green bay tree, full of sap and fruitful juices; then, all of a

Authorized Version.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. ⁶ I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6 ¹ For this shall every one that is godly ⁸ pray unto thee ^a in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

Revised Version.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid:

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD;

And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. [Selah]

6 For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee ^a in a time when thou mayest be found:

Surely when the great waters overflow they shall not reach unto him.

^a Prov. 28. 13; Isa. 65. 24; Luke 15. 18, 21, etc.; 1 John 1. 9.
¹ 11 Isa. 1. 16.—⁸ Isa. 65. 6; John 7. 34.—^a Heb. in a time of finding.

^a Or, in the time of finding out sin.

sudden, because of God's displeasure, dried up and scorched by drought. The man who wrote this psalm lived in a country where parching heats and saturating moisture alternate, and the valleys, sometimes lush and green and fruitful and fragrant, were at other times desolate and powdery and parched. It is quite possible that sin in David's case, as in so many others, brought physical illness as a result. **Selah**—This word is still a puzzle. It is generally thought that a musical pause is meant. See note in the BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

5. **I acknowledged my sin**—Just as soon as Nathan spoke the convicting word (2 Sam. 12. 13); but that was a long time after the sin had been committed. Months of agony would have been saved if David had acknowledged it at once. His confession was not quickly forgotten, however, as confessions sometimes are. See Psalm 51. 3. **Mine iniquity have I not hid**—No, not even from public gaze. David had many conspicuous faults of character besides that one which led to the sin of which this psalm is supposed to be the confession; but one human weakness he did not share—did not share it, at least, to any appreciable degree—the weakness of trying to appear better than he was. He was a man “in whose spirit there was no guile.” In place of “have I not hid” we may read “did I not hide,” and thus bring out more clearly and simply the sense. **Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin**—The narrative (2 Sam. 12. 13) we have already referred to. *Arthur Lake* cleverly translates this phrase, “The perversity of my aberration” or “wandering.” All men have sinned; that is, all have in some direction strayed from God's ideal of human life; but many sinners stray out of sheer ignorance; others stray out of stubbornness, perversity; they refuse to submit themselves to the great Lawgiver. These last are not only sinners, they are *iniquitous* sinners.

II. CONFIDENCE IN GOD. VERSES 6-11.

6. **For this**—Because thou forgivest the “iniquity of sin;” because for every penitent the divine blessing is waiting. He who experiences the favor of God is sure thus to commend it to others. **Shall every one**—Better, “let every one.” The word rendered **godly** is confessedly hard to translate. “A man of love” is a favorite rendering, “one who responds to God's covenant love.” (*Cheyne*.) “In the phrase, Let every one that is godly pray unto thee, we see not only that all the godly pray, but that every one of them prays for pardon. This is the very thing which our Saviour teaches his disciples, ‘When ye pray, say, Forgive us our trespasses.’”—*William Jay*. **In a time**—Compare Isa. 65. 6; Deut. 4. 29. “Because Jehovah has proved himself so ready to hear even the sinner, the pious are urged to cry to him before some sudden flood of temptation has made them lose his presence; so shall the great waters in which the psalmist sank be prevented from ever reaching them.”—*Moulton*. **When thou mayest be found**—Literally, “the time of finding;” it may just as readily refer to the finding of forgiveness as to the finding of Jehovah. **Surely in the floods of great waters**—“In this case there may be a particular allusion to the interval between the sin and punishment, during which the penitent confessions and importunate petitions of the sinner (that is, the offending

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
7 ^a Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with ¹⁰ songs of deliverance. Se'lah.	7 Thou art my hiding place; thou wilt preserve me from trouble; Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance. [Se'lah
8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: ^b I will guide thee with mine eye.	8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee.

^a Psalm 9, 9; 27, 5; 31, 20; 119, 114.—¹⁰ Exod. 15, 1; Judg. 5, 1; 2 Sam. 22, 1.—^b Heb. *I will counsel thee, mine eye shall be upon thee.*

saint, to whom alone the psalmist here refers) may avail to arrest the judgments which must inevitably follow. This effect is described in the last clause by the figure of a flood which is not suffered to extend to him. The word translated *surely* means in strictness *only*; that is, the effect of such a prayer will be only this, or, as we may say, neither more nor less.—*Alexander*. The sinner who persists in iniquity shall certainly be swept away by the floods of divine judgment, and so miserably perish.

7. Thou art my hiding place—Literally, “Thou art a covert unto me.” In modern hymnology the beautiful metaphors of this verse and the one before it are often used. With *Toplady* we sing: “Rock of ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in thee.” And with *Charles Wesley*:

Jesus, Lover of my soul, Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll, While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide, Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last!

In the psalmist's imagination the hospitable gates of a city of refuge probably arose. He had often seen the offender, panting and terror-stricken, safely closed within the gates of Hebron, and gently cared for by kind folk, while the avenger who had hotly pursued him was shut out. So “God is our refuge and defense: a very present help in time of trouble.” Notice also the word “my.” God had been a hiding place since time began; he is *my* hiding place when I run in and am safe. **Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance**—He who was surrounded by enemies is now surrounded by songs. A little while ago he could not turn in any direction without hearing a fresh accusation by his conscience; for every event of life had become an accuser; but now wherever he turns he finds a new “song.” “How effectively the music again comes in, prolonging the thought and rejoicing in the pardon! How sure he is that his experience is of priceless value to the world for all time, when he sees in his absolution a motive that will draw all the godly nearer to their Helper in heaven! So full his heart is of praise that he cannot but go back to his own story, and rejoice in God his hiding place, whose past wondrous love assures him that in the future songs of deliverance will ring him round, and all his path be encompassed with music of praise.”—*Maclaren*.

8. I will instruct thee—Like Peter, having become himself converted, he would now strengthen his brethren. Compare Luke 22, 32. So also, in Psalm 51, 13, he expresses the confidence that, when divinely restored, he will teach transgressors the way of the Lord, and sinners shall be converted unto him.

Then will I tell to sinners round, What a dear Saviour I have found;
I'll point to thy redeeming blood, And say, “Behold the way to God.”

The verse is hardly to be understood as coming from Jehovah; the construction of the entire psalm makes this popular interpretation untenable. “David is addressing another godly person who, like himself, has been overtaken in transgression or exposed to strong temptation, and offers to point out to him the path of safety.”—*Alexander*. **I will guide thee with mine eye**—This is admitted by all critical expositors to be an inaccurate translation. The

Authorized Version.

9 ¹¹ Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, *which have* ¹² no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10 ¹³ Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: but ¹⁴ he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 ¹⁵ Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in heart.

Revised Version.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: Whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in,

⁸ *Else* they will not come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: But he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

¹¹ Prov. 26. 3; James 3. 3. — ¹² Job 25. 11. — ¹³ Prov. 13. 21; Rom. 2. 9. — ¹⁴ Psalm 34. 8; 84. 12; Prov. 16. 20; Jer. 17. 7. — ¹⁵ Psalm 64. 10; 68. 3.

⁸ Or, *That they come not near.*

Revised Version has, "I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee," and this agrees substantially with the margin of the common version. "The idea is that of one who is telling another what way he is to take in order that he may reach a certain place; and he says he will watch him, or keep an eye upon him; he will not let him go wrong."—*Albert Barnes*. But while it seems to us a forced and inaccurate rendering which would regard this verse and the next as spoken by Jehovah to the psalmist, it is only fair to add that one or two scholars take this view, which is unquestionably the popular one, and has given rise to several favorite hymns.

9. **Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule**—Be not mulish. The mule is a proverbial type of stubborn persistency in evil, and we find analogous allusions to the horse in Jer. 5. 8; 8. 6. Let a friend's loving wisdom do for you what bit and bridle do for brutes. For those who **have no understanding**—whether they have four legs apiece or only two—there is only one possible course of treatment. Just as brutes cannot be brought into man's service except by a training based on force, so the impenitent sinner needs a hard discipline to make him God's servant. **Lest they come near unto thee**—Rather, "else they are not near thee," referring to horses and mules. Without "bit and bridle" these animals will not stay within reach. *Calvin* renders the clause, "But they kick against thee."

10. This verse is a "regular antithetic Hebrew parallelism." It teaches (what is everywhere taught by divine revelation) that events are good or bad according to the goodness or badness of the man they affect; that the riches of a rich worldling are bound to be a curse and to bring "many sorrows," while to the humble, trustful soul comes the beatitude, "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God." **Mercy shall compass him about**—"He shall be surrounded with mercy, as one is surrounded by the air or by the sunlight. He shall find mercy and favor everywhere, at home, abroad; by day, by night; in society, in solitude; in sickness, in health; in life, in death; in time, in eternity. He shall walk amid mercies; he shall die amid mercies; he shall live in a better world in the midst of eternal mercies."—*Albert Barnes*.

11. **Be glad . . . rejoice . . . shout**—How wonderful that such exultation may follow such iniquity and remorse! "There must be sincere sorrow, full confession, earnest prayer, simple faith, and holiest purpose to cease from sin. Then there is full remission and a freedom of spirit, a sense of deliverance and of divine mercy that causes all within the ransomed nature to rejoice. This is the essence of joy unspeakable and full of glory."—*Terry*. Compare 1 Peter 1. 8. It is the duty of every child of God to be glad. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." **Ye righteous**—"As opposed to the *wicked*; not the absolutely perfect, but those trusting in the mercy of Jehovah for deliverance both from punishment and sin."—*Alexander*. The chorus concludes with a hallelujah. The joyousness of Hebrew religion is well brought out by the climax in this verse.

Illustration 210. "When the poet Carpani inquired of his friend Haydn how it happened that his church music was so cheerful, the great composer made a most beautiful reply. 'I cannot,' he said, 'make it otherwise. I write according to the thoughts I feel. When I think upon God my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart it will be pardoned me that I serve him with a cheerful spirit.'"

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

In every age poets have found themes in their own experiences and have wrought their own lives into their verse; for example, Dante, Burns, Byron, Goethe. David tells in verse the story of his own experiences as **A Forgiven Sinner**. The poem presents five aspects:

I. Sin. Verses 1, 2. "Transgression," "sin," "iniquity," "guile," are the dark forms looming up in the background of the picture; they are the depths out of which the soul rises to a better life.

II. Discipline. Verses 3, 4, 9. David recognizes the suffering that came upon him as in some way connected with his sin. It was not punishment, for that looks backward; it was discipline, which looks forward and upward. More than one soul has been led through affliction to seek salvation. Happy are those who do not need discipline to lead them to righteousness. See verse 9.

III. Confession. Verse 5. Suffering has wrought its work, and the sinner makes his acknowledgment. One must own that he is a sinner before he can become a saint.

IV. Forgiveness. Verses 1, 2, 5. After confession comes pardon, and the seeker is accepted before God.

V. Blessedness. Verses 6-11. The latter part of the poem expresses the condition of the saved soul. 1. He is delivered from trouble (verses 6, 7). His sorrow ends when salvation comes. 2. He receives instruction and guidance (verses 8, 9). What a privilege to be under the personal care of the Almighty! 3. He enjoys mercy (verse 10). "Mercy shall compass him about," he is surrounded by God's grace. 4. He possesses joy (verse 11). He may well rejoice, God is his friend.

DAVID	
KEPT SILENCE ABOUT HIS SIN	ACKNOWLEDGED HIS SIN
AND WAS	
TROUBLED. BURDENED.	FORGIVEN. BLESSED.
WHAT BROUGHT THE CHANGE?	
DAVID'S DETERMINATION,	
"I WILL CONFESS MY TRANSGRESSIONS."	
"IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS HE IS FAITHFUL ... TO FORGIVE."	

LESSON VIII.—AUGUST 23.

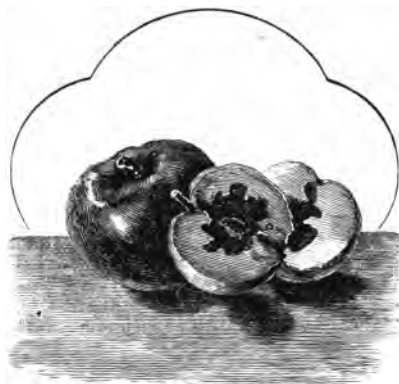
ABSALOM'S REBELLION.—2 SAM. 15. 1-12.

[Read chapters 15 and 16.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.—Exod. 20. 12.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

HIDDEN CAUSES OF THE REBELLION.—"We have in the history before us the beginning of the shattering of the theocratic kingdom and the disruption of David's house and family, brought about by the crimes of his two eldest sons. We are, however, to look behind the apparent cause of this downfall of David to the real one, which was in David's own sin. The bitter fruits of his unholy amour with Bath-sheba and his cruel murder of Uriah are now being pressed to his own lips, and he is compelled to eat them. David had been forewarned of



this by the prophet: 'Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house. . . . Thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun' (2 Sam. 12. 10-12). The intervening chapters between this one and Lesson VI give us the particulars of the course of events after David's sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. After his rebuke by the prophet Nathan, and his repentance, we see the beginning of trouble in the death of David's child, the fruit of his sin with Bath-sheba (2 Sam. 12); the horrible sin of Amnon with his half-sister

Tamar (2 Sam. 13), in which David must have seen as in a mirror a magnified and distorted image of his own sin; then comes the murder of Amnon, David's oldest son, by Absalom, his best beloved one, as an act of revenge for the former's dishonor of his sister Tamar (2 Sam. 13. 28), in which David must have seen a horrible parody of his murder of Uriah. Then follows the banishment of Absalom from the city and country, his partial forgiveness and final restoration to Jerusalem and to the favor of the king, through the intrigue of Joab and his own inherent force of character. David loved Absalom with the love of a foolish and fond father, and allowed it to get the better of his sense of justice. Indeed, it was David's weakness in not first punishing Amnon that led up to his murder by Absalom; then it was his further weakness in not punishing Absalom that led up to the conspiracy of the latter."—*Pentecost*.

A DRAMA IN HISTORY.—"The revolt of Absalom is one of the most dramatic episodes in Scripture history. From beginning to end there is a unity and completeness about it which is perhaps only rivaled by the history of Joseph. For purposes of study—though not for teaching—it will be best understood by being divided in dramatic fashion, thus:

"Prologue or Introduction—David's sin and its consequences.

"Scenes or Chapters: 1. The Exile. 2. The Popular Favorite. 3. The Usurper. 4. The Fugitive King. 5. The Two Counselors. 6. The Battle.

"Epilogue or Conclusion—David's grief and restoration."—*Stock*.

In this arrangement the prologue and epilogue secure attention to the fact that the story is but an episode in David's life, and that he is really the central figure; and also remind us of the connection between his great sin and the misfortunes that followed, showing both the justice of God in the chastisement and his mercy in its removal.

ABSALOM'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE.—"In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him" (2 Sam. 14. 25). One particular and chief characteristic of his beauty was his magnificent hair, which flowed in luxuriant locks down over his shoulders. It was his pride and the pride of the people. It was carefully kept and regularly weighed, and the weight of it bulletined to the people.

ABSALOM'S CHARACTER.—"Son of the princess Maachah of Geshur, he had inherited in an extraordinary degree the physical beauty of his father's family, but except in this and in his power of winning popularity he owed nothing to his descent. There is scarcely a good word to be said for him, unless it be such to admit that his elder brother was even worse than he. Vain, vindictive, and false-hearted, without a trace of gratitude to his overindulgent father, or of love to anyone but himself, he had not even the poor compensation of brains, which have so

often atoned for darker crimes in the eyes of a not too discriminating world. Had his plot succeeded the new king would have been only the gilded sepulcher of his predecessor's greatness. He perished, and none wept for him save the father, who saw in his vanished happiness the just retribution for his own desolation of another's happy home."—*Moulton*.

THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.—1. Sin of Vanity, Deut. 8. 14-17; 2 Sam. 14. 25, 26; Isa. 3. 16, 17; Luke 14. 11; 2 Cor. 12. 7. 2. Sin of Ambition, Gen. 11. 4; 1 Kings 1. 5; Matt. 20. 20; Mark 9. 33-35; 3 John 9. 3. Sin of Selfishness, 1 Sam. 25. 3-11; Mal. 1. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 15; Phil. 2. 21; Jude 11. 4. Sin of Deceit, Psalm 118. 119; 5. 6; Prov. 27. 6; Jer. 17. 9; Rom. 3. 13. 5. Sin of Conspiracy, 2 Kings 12. 20; Esther 2. 21-23; Jer. 5. 26; 11. 9; Acts 23. 12-15. 6. Sin of Ingratitude, Gen. 11. 23; Judg. 8. 34; 2 Chron. 24. 22; Psalm 7. 3-5; 106. 7. 7. Sin of Ungodliness, Psalm 36. 1; 14. 1; Jer. 6. 16; Ezek. 12. 2; Rom. 10. 21.

TIME.—B. C. 1024 and 1023.

PLACES.—Jerusalem; Hebron.

LESSON HYMN.—

How helpless nature lies, Unconscious of her load!
The heart unchanged can never rise To happiness and God.
Can aught but power divine The stubborn will subdue?
'Tis thine, eternal Spirit, thine To form the heart anew.
O change these hearts of ours, And give them life divine;
Then shall our passions and our powers, Almighty Lord, be thine.—*Anne Steele*.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (August 17), Absalom's Rebellion, 2 Sam. 15. 1-12. *Tuesday*, David's flight, 2 Sam. 15. 13-23. *Wednesday*, David's submission, 2 Sam. 15. 24-31. *Thursday*, Shimei's curse, 2 Sam. 16. 5-14. *Friday*, Absalom's wicked intent, 2 Sam. 17. 1-14. *Saturday*, Causing sorrow to parents, Prov. 19. 20-29. *Sunday*, Rebellious children, Isa. 1. 1-9.

Authorized Version.

1 And ¹it came to pass after this, that Ab'sa-lom ²prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

Revised Version.

1 And it came to pass after this, that Ab'sa-lom prepared him a chariot and horses,

¹ Chap. 12. 11.—² 1 Kings 1. 5.

I. THE POLITE PRINCE. VERSES 1-6.

1. It came to pass—As the fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy (2 Sam. 12. 10, 11). Absalom's plot had been meditated for years. After this—After Absalom's return from Geshur and his restoration and reception by King David, as described in verses 20-33 of the preceding chapter. Prepared him chariots and horses—He lived not only like a prince, but like an heir to the throne. Compare the similar act of Adonijah, who at a later day aspired to be king and endeavored to usurp the throne (1 Kings

1. 5). This is the first mention of horses among the Israelites. They had been recently introduced from Egypt, and were costly and rare. Fifty—A son of the king riding in a state chariot,



A CHARIOT OF WAR.

Authorized Version.

2 And Ab'sa-lom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy ^a came to the king for judgment, then Ab'sa-lom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is one of the tribes of Is'ra-el.

3 And Ab'sa-lom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but ^b there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

4 Ab'sa-lom said moreover, ³ Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man

Revised Version.

2 and fifty men to run before him. And Ab'sa-lom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgment, then Ab'sa-lom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Is'ra-el. And Ab'sa-lom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Ab'sa-lom said moreover, Oh that I were made

^a Heb. to come. — ^b Or, none will hear thee from the king downward. — ³ Judg. 9. 29.

with fifty footmen as attendants, would powerfully attract the attention of the populace. Elijah made use of this custom to impress Ahab (1 Kings 18. 46). Compare 1 Sam. 8. 11; 1 Kings 1. 5.

2. **Rose up early**—Public business in the East is in many places transacted early, before

the heat of the day. Absalom's intense zeal for himself prompted him to early action. He would be first on the ground. Possibly his early rising was intended to forestall the king, who would certainly sit in the gate during part of the day. **Beside the way of the gate**—On one side of the street which led to the door of the king's palace, in which door David himself was accustomed to administer justice. Here he intercepted such persons as came with complaints of wrong to Jerusalem, and by flattering arts sought to ingratiate himself in their good will. **A controversy**—Rather, "a suit at law." Men who lost their "suits," or failed to gain attention from the king, would grow discontented and indignant—fit instruments for

conspiracy. Foreign wars, extensive building enterprises, the love of pleasure, and perhaps the weakness of advancing years, led David doubtless often to neglect his duty as the only "court of appeals" in all Israel. **Absalom called**—Thus showing friendly familiarity and affecting a particular interest in each newcomer. Such condescension would bewitch most orientals. **Of one of the tribes**—The man would name his tribe, city, and family.

3. **Said**—Would say, presumably after hearing him state his case. **Thy matters are good**—"Thy cause is just." This the citizen already believed; he already felt injured by a lax administration of justice, and would promptly contrast Absalom's interest and sense of justice with David's unconcern. **No man deputed**—Rather, "a hearer there is not for thee from the king;" the king takes no interest in the wrongs of the people.

4. **Oh that I were made judge**—"Not on my account, however, but on yours." Absa-



"THE WAY OF THE GATE."

Authorized Version.

which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Ab'sa-lom to all Is'ra-el that came to the king for judgment: ⁴so Ab'sa-lom stole the hearts of the men of Is'ra-el.

7 And it came to pass ⁵after forty years, that Ab'sa-lom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in He'bron.

8 ⁶For thy servant ⁷vowed a vow ⁸while I abode at Ge'shur in Syr'i-a, saying, If the

Revised Version.

judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took hold of him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Ab'sa-lom to all Is'ra-el that came to the king for judgment: so Ab'sa-lom stole the hearts of the men of Is'ra-el.

7 And it came to pass at the end of ¹forty years, that Ab'sa-lom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in He'bron. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Ge'shur in ²Syr'i-a, saying, If the

⁴ Rom. 16. 18. — ⁵ 1 Sam. 16. 1. — ⁶ 1 Sam. 16. 2. — ⁷ Gen. 28. 20, 21. — ⁸ Chap. 13. 28.

¹ According to some ancient authorities, *four*. — ² Heb. *Aram*.

lom is too wily to express a wish that he were king. "Probably enough in this time of peace the number of litigants was much too large to be fairly dealt with by one man; and by diligently fomenting this grievance Absalom was able to create a feeling in his own favor in the country surrounding Jerusalem. Litigants at a distance would generally get their cases settled by the elders in their own cities. And so it was that in the eventual division between Judah and the Ten Tribes the latter sided with David and the former with Absalom."—*Moulton*.

5. When any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance—His princely bearing and retinue would attract attention, and all of lower rank who came near would formally show their deference. Put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him—Such magnanimous condescension would win men's hearts in any country and any age. All that seems to us to be exaggerated—the "obeisance," kissing, and the like—are characteristic of the East to-day as well as in antiquity, and not at all peculiar to Absalom.

6. Stole the hearts—So most translate, with the Septuagint. But there is considerable authority for translating "deceived the men," as in the nearly identical phrase of Gen. 21. 26. The people were too simple to see through Absalom's sham interest in them.

Illustration 211. There are cities, such as Lisbon and Constantinople, which, when viewed from the sea, present the most enchanting appearance, and with their terraces, fine buildings, and luxuriant groves standing out in the clear atmosphere, with the bright blue encircling them above and beneath, and the sun lighting them up with a golden glory, look like a glimpse of fairyland. But when the traveler disembarks and actually enters the city the illusion is utterly dispelled. Not that the sun is less bright, or that the blue sky fades, but that they shed their radiance upon filthy streets and unsightliness of all kinds. As attractive as was the first view, so repellent is the reality. We shall find as striking a contrast between appearance and reality in Absalom.

II. THE UNNATURAL SON. VERSES 7-12.

7. Forty years—It is curious that this palpable blunder should appear both in the Hebrew and the Septuagint. The easy correction "four," given by *Josephus* and some old versions, is just what we should expect. But more probably "the larger numeral is due to the corruption of some vague word, as 'a long time.'"—*Klosterman*. My vow . . . in Hebron—It has been plausibly supposed (*Terry*) that as Hebron was the birthplace of Absalom he expected to find many adherents there among the friends of his youth, and perhaps many of the people of Hebron felt keen dissatisfaction over the removal of the seat of government to Jerusalem. The punctuation of the text leaves us to assume that the choice of a place to pay the vow was arbitrary. Or perhaps the text should be read, "to Jehovah in Hebron," as to a tutelary deity, as Jacob made an offering to "the God of Beth-el" (Gen. 35. 7, etc.).

8. Geshur was northeast of Bashan, about halfway between Damascus and the Sea of

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
LORD shall bring me again indeed to Je-ru'sa-lem, then I will serve the LORD.	LORD shall indeed bring me again to Je-ru'-
9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to He'bron.	9 sa-lem, then I will ³ serve the LORD. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he
10 But Ab'sa-lom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Is'ra-el, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Ab'sa-lom reigneth in He'bron.	10 arose, and went to He'bron. But Ab'sa-lom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Is'ra-el, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say,
11 And with Ab'sa-lom went two hundred men out of Je-ru'sa-lem, <i>that were</i> ⁸ called; and they went ¹⁰ in their simplicity, and they knew not anything.	11 Ab'sa-lom is king in He'bron. And with Ab'sa-lom went two hundred men out of Je-ru'sa-lem, <i>that were</i> invited, and went in their simplicity; and they knew not any-

⁸ 1 Sam. 9. 17; 16. 3, 5.—¹⁰ Gen. 20. 5.⁸ Or, worship.

Galilee. Absalom, as we have seen, was the grandson of the king of Geshur. Talmi, his grandfather, perhaps belonged to the gigantic Anakim. Of course Absalom would not have been safe in Geshur if so powerful a king as David had pursued him. It is possible that such a vow as this was made, for fickle natures pass readily back and forth from emotional piety to crime; but as Absalom was already in the depths of an unnatural conspiracy it is probable that all this talk was pretext and lies. **If the Lord**, etc.—The sham vow is made in the bargaining spirit which marked that of the unregenerate Jacob (Gen. 28. 20-22). "One text of the Septuagint adds 'in Hebron' at the end of this verse, and this seems right, since the whole point was the place where the vow was to be performed."—*Moulton*. That this "service" was the mere performance of a ceremonial we may assume; but even that would seem to mean much in the case of a prince whose mother had been brought up a worshiper of false gods, and who had taken refuge at the court of his heathen ancestors. His taking two hundred men with him (verse 11) would not seem strange or suspicious when he was understood to be going to Hebron for such a pious purpose; it was all of a piece with his ostentatious manner of life.

9. Go in peace—David seems to have been utterly without suspicion that black conspiracy was hidden under Absalom's avowed object of going to offer sacrifice at the place of his birth, and where he himself had reigned over Judah for seven years. David was probably, at this time, a rather lax monarch. His early vigor in war and statecraft had given place to luxurious engrossment in personal pleasure. His self-indulgence made him deaf to the complaints of his subjects and blind to the treachery of his son.

10. Spies—These secret messengers were to ascertain how much support there was likely to be of an insurrection, and they would only give the signal where they found sufficient discontent to work upon. Hebron was a well-chosen rendezvous, not only as focusing the grievances and tribal pride of Judah, but as an ancient city chafing at its loss of its privileges as metropolis. Outside Judah the rebellion found little support. David's rule had been, on the whole, wise and lenient, nor was his son likely to improve on it. **The sound of the trumpet**—The character of this concerted signal shows with what consummate ability the rebellion had been planned, and also what classes sustained it. It would seem from this passage, and from the subsequent history also, that the army and the priesthood had been won over to the cause of Absalom. It was from garrison to garrison all over the land that the treasonable news flew. If the success of the scheme had depended upon speed (as is usually the case with weak causes) couriers would have been sent on gallop. But abundance of time had been taken to perfect these plans. If it had been a popular movement beacon fires might have spread the announcement through most of the little land in one night. But while the most had been made of cases of discontent in common life, this was not a popular movement. The "trumpet" was in the hands of officials (priests and soldiers); and it was the very classes for whom David had done most who now proposed to dethrone him.

11. Two hundred men—Not too large a company for one who had been seen to ride in a

Authorized Version.

12 And Ab'sa-lom sent for A-hith'o-phel the Gi'lo-nite, ¹¹ Da'vid's counselor, from his city, *even* from ¹⁰ Gi'loh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people ¹³ increased continually with Ab'sa-lom.

Revised Version.

12 thing. And Ab'sa-lom ⁴ sent for A-hith'o-phel the Gi'lo-nite, Da'vid's counselor, from his city, *even* from Gi'loh, while he offered the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Ab'sa-lom.

¹¹ Psalm 41. 9; 55. 12-14. — ¹⁰ Josh. 15. 51. — ¹³ Psalm 3. 1.

⁴ Or, sent Ahithophel.

state chariot and with footmen (verse 1). But these seem to have been "gentry," to use a modern phrase, rather than "guards." They went simply as invited guests, in **their simplicity**, to a feast like Samuel's in 1 Sam. 9. 22. But they were likely to join the plot on finding themselves thus compromised. Absalom probably thought that when the tidings of his usurpation spread, the fact that so many persons of distinction were joined to him would silence opposition and awe his enemies into submission. His guests, at all events, would be in his power. Compare his treacherous appearance of generosity on a former festival occasion (2 Sam. 13. 23-29).

12. Sent for Ahithophel.—"This verse should be understood as a condensed statement of numerous facts without distinguishing the time of each procedure. We need not suppose that Ahithophel was not sent for until the festal party had assembled at Hebron, nor need the expression **while he offered sacrifices** be explained as requiring such a supposition. This latter expression should be translated as referring to the time of the feast. The thought of the verse is that Absalom sent and called Ahithophel, notifying him to be present at Hebron at the time when he proposed to offer the sacrifice, which they had doubtless already planned privately together. This offering of sacrifice was, with the ringleaders of the rebellion, no holy service to insure the blessing of God, but a means to blind the king and people and help to inaugurate sedition. Ahithophel is called **the Gilonite** from his native city **Giloh**, which was one of the cities of the hill country of Judah (Josh. 15. 51). He was one of David's most sagacious and influential counselors, and his defection gave the rebellion great power and seriously troubled the heart of David. Compare verse 31. It has been conjectured that Ahithophel forsook David on account of his sin with Bath-sheba, who was [probably] his granddaughter. Compare chap. 11. 3; 23. 34."—*Terry*. The Hebrew text is manifestly unsound, and so is the Septuagint, but the sense of the Revised Version is likely in itself, and agrees with *Josephus*. Ahithophel's extraordinary shrewdness, vividly commented on in 2 Sam. 16. 28, is illustrated by the advice he gave. In brief, this was to make the breach with David irrevocable, and to strike a decisive blow before the loyalists had time to recover their alarm. By playing on Absalom's vanity, so as to secure delay, Hushai broke the rebellion, which indeed had no element of permanence. The similarity between Ahithophel and Judas has often been noticed. **While**—"Absalom performed the ostensible object of his journey to give time for the assembling of his adherents. Meanwhile that 'fool's sacrifice' was not unmarked by Him whose name was vainly used therein."—*Moulton*.

Illustration 212. A building in India suddenly fell, and it was found that the supports had been eaten through and honeycombed by a small worm. So David's throne suddenly tottered, but the germs of destruction had been long growing.

Illustration 213. Absalom was the son of a heathen mother. One of Napoleon's wisest sayings was, "What France needs is good mothers." All the world is like France in that.

THIS REBELLION WAS WICKED IN EVERY WAY. It was against God. It was against the Lord's anointed. It was against a loving father. It was utterly heartless and without excuse. This is true of all sin, and in these respects Absalom is a type of every sinner (1 Sam. 15. 23; Mal. 1. 6; Prov. 8. 36; Luke 6. 46).

IT IS A HOLY DUTY TO HONOR PARENTS, heed their counsels, obey their commands, and submit to their guidance in childhood and youth, and in maturer years to render them respect and

reverence. So did not Absalom; but so did Jesus (Exod. 20. 12; 21. 17; Eph. 6. 1-3; Gen. 45. 11; Deut. 21. 18-21; Prov. 13. 1; 15. 5; Luke 2. 51).

TRICKERY AND RECTITUDE.

1. ALL SUCCESS DEPENDS ON WINNING MEN'S HEARTS. It is alike true of clergymen, physicians, mechanics, merchants, politicians, and soldiers—of mothers at home and students at school—that those who attain the highest and most permanent eminence are those in whom their fellows have learned to repose the fullest confidence. Even great intellectual power fails of its best effectiveness when it is not based on the heart's affections. But hearts should be *earned*, not "stolen."

2. THE TRICKY MAN MAY BE TEMPORARILY SUCCESSFUL. The art of "stealing the hearts of men" is as easily acquired as the art of stealing their watches. Its practice requires no greater ability than more common kinds of theft, and it is quite as vicious and contemptible as they. There are few lines of life in which duplicity and lack of scruple may not for a while succeed; there are none in which they are not held in contempt when discovered.

3. THE TRICKY MAN CANNOT BE PERMANENTLY SUCCESSFUL. Even skeptical philosophers tell us that there is a natural law which "makes for righteousness;" that "one increasing purpose runs" through all secular events—a purpose of virtue and rectitude. All forces of nature and of society tend to get the stolen watch away from the thief; and hearts are quite as prone as watches to slip from the grasp of the unworthy possessor. It is as impossible for even secular greatness to be well founded upon tricks and pretense as for an Eiffel Tower to be safely reared upon a quicksand.

4. INTEGRITY IS THE HIGHEST WISDOM. "Honesty is the best policy" is a limping maxim, whose lameness is incurable; for real honesty cannot be a "policy" at all. But sincere, lofty purpose eventually surmounts all life's obstacles. The man of rectitude is the true king of hearts. Temporary defeats only make the permanent success of integrity the more glorious. "Godliness is profitable unto all things."

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The career of Absalom suggests a number of serious **Warnings to Young Men.**

I. A warning against **ambition**. Verse 1. An aspiration may be noble, as when Cromwell said he believed that he could do more for England than another man; but the lust of power, madness for office, is evil, and has ruined thousands. "Fling away ambition; by that sin fell the angels," said Cardinal Wolsey in Shakespeare's "Henry VIII."

II. A warning against **pride**. Verse 1. Absalom was entitled to the state of a prince, but put on that of a king. Multitudes of young men have been wrecked by the desire to live in a style of wealth beyond their station and their means.

III. A warning against **flattery**. Verses 2-6. Socrates, when asked what was the most dangerous beast, said, "Of wild beasts, the slanderer; of tame, the flatterer." Absalom flattered, but only that he might steal; for every flatterer is a self-seeker. Let the young man beware of the flatterer's honeyed lips, under which lurks the poison of serpents.

IV. A warning against **hypocrisy**. Verses 7-9. One who is plotting murder and conspiracy thinks little of assuming a pretense of religion. And yet this

DISHONOR	
CAST BY	
ABSALOM	MANY
HIS EARTHLY	OUR HEAVENLY
FATHER.	
HIS ACTIONS	OUR ACTIONS
TURN MEN	
FROM THE	
KING TO HIMSELF.	LORD TO THE WORLD.
"LOOK WELL TO THY WAYS."	

was one of Absalom's greatest crimes. The young man who goes to church only because churchgoing may bring him business is following in Absalom's footsteps, and is very likely to end in his failure.

V. A warning against **filial impiety**. The GOLDEN TEXT gives a principle which is verified in universal experience, that honor to parents is a step to success. Absalom sinned against a kind father. One of the most dangerous symptoms of the present time is the "bad boy" style of stories, which crop out in contempt of parents and open crime.

VI. A warning against **political corruption**. The motive of Absalom's rebellion was the desire for power and all that power brings. To regard the State as for the interest of the officeholders, to use office as the means of gain, to debase public interests to private ends—this was Absalom's crime, and it is a sin of our time also.



LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS VIII AND IX.

THE FLIGHT OF DAVID.—The conspiracy grows apace, so much so that David says to the few who remain faithful, "Let us flee." This they do, only ten women being left to look after the palace. The fugitives tarry in Beth-merhak ("the far house"), not identified, but somewhere near Jerusalem. The faithful band of six hundred tried warriors who had followed David's fortunes from Gath still cling to the fallen king, and we get a most touching story of one Ittai, the Gittite. This Philistine of Gath, with unflinching loyalty, elects to follow the fortunes still of his old leader; it is great proof of the love inspired by David in those with whom he was brought into personal contact. It is remarkable that David should say, "Return and abide with the king"—you, a stranger and an exile from your own land, had better make your peace with the new ruler. But no; all the men and their little ones pass over—over the brook Kidron (now no longer a "brook," for its bed is filled up with *débris*); and they go the "way of the wilderness." The ark is also brought by the priests, but is sent back; and here the tact and foresight of the old warrior are seen. He wishes to have faithful friends at the new court—friends who will keep him informed of passing events. David proposes to stay at the "fords," or, as other readings have it, in the "plains" of the wilderness, where he will await the news. Up the Mount of Olives, "weeping," and with every sign of woe, David passes on, probably taking the central of the three pathways which climb the mount—a path deep worn in the rocky limestone, and which leads directly over the summit of what is now called *Jebel et Tôr*. The range of Olivet is really four hills; the ridge runs north and south, bending at one extremity toward the west, at the other toward the east. The summit of *Et Tôr* is separated from the north crest of Scopus by a depression, and it is in this depression that the road runs. There was an old sanctuary on the summit, and we read that David worshiped there. From that summit "the way of the wilderness" leads northeast, and very soon you are entangled in the passes and barren mountains of Judea, now, as then, desolate, bare, and lifeless; hills which the wind, driving from north or east, has rendered bare and stony, with occasional patches of vegetation in the hollows or when near springs. Here, so close to Jerusalem, it is easy to find a desert almost as secluded and lonely as in Sinai.

HUSHAI, "THE ARCHITE," a friend or private counselor of David's, now meets the old king; he comes with torn garments and dusty head; but he is advised to go back and pretend to be an adherent of Absalom. It is impossible to defend this double-faced advice. Ziba then meets David with bread, fruits, and a skin of wine. Ziba does all this so that he may steal the patrimony of poor Mephibosheth, whom he falsely accuses of plotting against David. It says little for David's judgment that he so readily believed a story against a son of his old friend Jonathan. With a word he gives away the property of the poor cripple, and passes on his way, to be cursed by Shimei, who was an adherent of Saul's house. From

the high ground above the road he cursed and threw stones, acting just as might be seen by any stranger passing through this same village, the inhabitants of which do not bear a good reputation; at all events, they well resemble Shimei in the bad language and casting of stones and dust. Though so near Jerusalem the natives seem of a different type, and not at all fond of strangers. Hushai goes to Absalom, who expresses his surprise. The cool way in which this usurping son speaks of his father as "thy friend," "Why wentest thou not with thy friend?" shows what a bad heart Absalom had. He gets a deceitful answer. It is a conflict of wits and untruthfulness, and the older man gains. He has not lived for years in an oriental court not to be master in the art of lying. Absalom follows the foul advice of Ahithophel, who wishes to place a barrier forever between father and son, and so adopts a mode of insult which only a depraved and an Eastern mind would think of. Ahithophel in other respects gives Absalom wise advice, but it is overruled, and Hushai, with his crafty tongue, prevails. Ahithophel is wise enough to see that Hushai's advice is fatal to Absalom; so, putting his affairs in order, he ends his life. Hushai had skillfully flattered the vain mind of Absalom by suggesting that all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, would follow him, whereas he well knew that the success of the conspiracy was due to its suddenness, and that all David wanted was *time*.

THE ADVENTURE OF JONATHAN AND AHIMAAS.—David is kept fully informed, and crosses the Jordan fords. The investigations of the Palestine Fund prove that the river has many fords; so it is not necessary to attempt to identify which one they crossed by. Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel ("The fuller's-springs"). This well was at one time supposed to be the *Bir Eyûb*, or Job's Well, a little way down the Kidron valley, and south of Siloam; but it has been proved to be the spring called by the natives "The Mother of Steps," and by the Christians "The Virgin's Well." This intermittent spring is fed by a subterranean aqueduct. The water flows at uncertain intervals—two or three times a day in summer; then only once in two or three days. A channel discovered near had caves in it in which were found cooking dishes, waterpots, lamps, and a small amount of charcoal. It is, therefore, easy to see how these two spies could remain so close to Jerusalem and yet not be discovered. A maid-servant is the go-between. Here this shows Eastern customs. This woman could go to the spring for water without any suspicion being attached to her, and she could tell the men in hiding the news. A small boy, however, had seen them, and told Absalom. Boys still prowls about these Eastern wells, and it was owing to a boy that near here, not long ago, one of the most interesting discoveries was made. The spies quickly escaped to Bahurim, identified as 'Almit, three and a half miles northeast of Jerusalem. At this ruin are several remarkable rock-cut cisterns. In a courtyard is a well. The text says the spies went down a well; the woman's wit covered the well mouth, and she spread bruised corn over it, as if it were solid ground and the corn had there been crushed. She gives a truly Eastern reply to Absalom's messengers—a reply which conceals the truth, implies a falsehood, and yet the sort of enigmatical answer that to this day Easterners delight in. It seems impossible for them to give a straightforward answer; evasion is common from their birth.

THE BATTLE.—To the old sanctuary, Mahanaim, goes David. Absalom follows with his army, Amasa being commander in chief. This son of an Ishmaelite father would seem to have been an illegitimate son of David's sister. This is the first mention of his name. To Mahanaim various old enemies of David now come to bring him, in his adversity, presents of much-needed food. Under his tried captains, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, the soldiers are placed, for the people will not consent that the old king should expose his life. The battle takes place in the "wood of Ephraim." The word "wood" does not mean a forest, but a broken oak, uneven, rocky, with perhaps large bushes in it. There certainly was one tree, a great oak or terebinth. *Josephus* says the two armies were drawn up for battle in "the great plain." *Dr. Selah Merrill* makes the most satisfactory attempt to identify both Mahanaim and the site of

this battle, so fatal to Absalom. He suggests that the account given of the two messengers sent to David gives a clew to the ground. Ahimaaz wishes to run. Joab declines to trust him, but selects a stranger, a Cushite, to run; but afterward allows Ahimaaz to go, but says he will get no reward, implying that he cannot possibly come in first; but we are told Ahimaaz went "by the way of the plain." Doubtless he was familiar with the country and took the easiest route, while the stranger might take the direct line, and yet, having to cross wādies and broken ground, his speed would be impeded. Most travelers have suggested *Mahneh*, fourteen miles southeast of Bethshan. These ruins cover about a fourth of a mile in extent, but do not indicate any great age or importance; but no one could "run by the way of the plain" to reach it. There is no room in *Wādy Mahneh* for troops to maneuver by "thousands," and the distance at which the runners were discovered by the watchman is not applicable to *Mahneh*. There does not exist for many miles in any direction from *Mahneh* a region corresponding to a field or a great plain; but six miles north of the *Zerka*, *Wādy 'Ajlūn* is found. It has three names. There is a large ruin called *Fakaris* at the mouth of the wādy. Here is an important valley, abundance of water, and the ruins of an important city. Three miles farther north, passing about midway a smaller ruin, mostly buried, *Wādy Suleikhat* is reached; this wādy bears the name of *El Kīrbek* in its upper course. Here water is abundant, and at the mouth of the wādy are the ruins of a large city lying on both sides of the stream. This is by far the largest ruin in the Jordan valley east of the river. *Khurbet Suleikhat* is some three hundred feet above the plain, and among the foothills in such a way that it overlooks the valley and passes nearly a mile to the west of it. The surrounding country is most fertile, and hence we should naturally expect that the principal city of the valley would be placed here. A watchman from a tower could see to the north a considerable distance, also clear across the valley to the west, and down the valley to the south, a long stretch, nearly or quite to the point where the *Zerka* and Jordan unite at the foot of *Kūrn Sūrtūbek*. In addition to these facts, if we consider that the town is double (*Mahanaim* means "Two-hosts" or "Two-camps"), that these ruins lie on two sides of a stream, their size, the abundance of good water, the fertile region about it, it would seem that here the principal city of East Jordan of David's time probably stood. Ahimaaz outran Cush, but when asked the news evaded the question as to the safety of Absalom, pleading that he had only seen a "great tumult." The second messenger was more truthful, or probably ignorant, being a stranger, of the great love David bore his rebellious son, and so told in a roundabout way that Absalom was slain. The father's heart is broken; victory is counted as naught; only the thought of his handsome and loved boy fills his heart, and he breaks out into the touching wail, "Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"—*Harper's "Bible and Modern Discoveries."*



LESSON IX.—AUGUST 30.

ABSALOM'S DEATH.—2 SAM. 18. 24-3.

[Read chapters 17 and 18.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.—Psalm 1. 6.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

ABSALOM'S LIFE, says *Dr. Clarke*, "was quadruply forfeited to the law: 1. In having murdered his brother Amnon. 2. In having excited insurrection in the State. 3. In having taken up arms against his father (Deut. 21. 18, 21). 4. In having taken to himself his father's concubines (Lev. 18. 29). Long ago he should have died by the hand of justice."

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS OF THIS LESSON.—1. Sin pursued must end in ruin. There is no escape. Its earned and promised wages is eternal death, and will surely be paid. How terrible and how easily avoidable is that penalty! (Rom. 6. 23; 2. 5; Ezek. 33. 11; 2 Peter 3. 9; Matt. 25. 41; 2 Thess. 1. 9.) 2. Christ's sorrow over lost souls is greater sorrow than David's was, just as his love is greater. He thinks of the sin, the cause of the ruin, as well as the woe. He even died to save us from both. How deep will be his sorrow in the judgment day! (Judg. 10. 16; John 8. 16; Luke 19. 10, 41, 42; Matt. 23. 37.) 3. Our one great need is a new heart. Let us seek it at Jesus's feet in repentance and prayer (John 3. 8; Gal. 6. 15; 2 Cor. 5. 17; Psalm 51. 10).

THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.—1. A Father's Authority, Lev. 19. 3; Deut. 5. 16; 27. 16; Prov. 6. 20-22; Eph. 6. 1. 2. A Father's Duty, Deut. 11. 19; Gen. 18. 19; Psalm 78. 46; Prov. 19. 18; Eph. 6. 4. 3. A Father's Love, Gen. 37. 3; Deut. 1. 31; 2 Sam. 13. 39; Luke 11. 11, 12; 2 Cor. 6. 18. 4. A Father's Failure, 1 Sam. 3. 18; 2 Chron. 33. 6; 1 Kings 1. 6; Psalm 78. 8; Prov. 29. 15. 5. A Father's Responsibility, Exod. 20. 5; 1 Sam. 3. 14; Isa. 14. 21; Hosea 4. 6; Heb. 12. 5. 6. A Father's Grief, Gen. 37. 34, 35; 2 Sam. 12. 16, 17; 1 Chron. 7. 22; Prov. 17. 25; 28. 7. 7. A Father's Glory, Psalm 37. 26; Prov. 10. 1; 28. 15, 16, 24, 25; 29. 3.

LESSON HYMN.—

If, on a quiet sea, Toward heaven we calmly sail,
With grateful hearts, O God, to thee, We'll own the favoring gale.
But should the surges rise, And rest delay to come,
Blest be the tempest, kind the storm, Which drives us nearer home.
Soon shall our doubts and fears All yield to thy control;
Thy tender mercies shall illumine The midnight of the soul.—*Toplady.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (August 24), David's anxiety for Absalom, 2 Sam. 18. 1-8. *Tuesday*, Absalom's defeat and death, 2 Sam. 18. 9-17. *Wednesday*, David's grief, 2 Sam. 18. 19-33. *Thursday*, David's return, 2 Sam. 19. 9-15. *Friday*, Destruction of the ungodly, Psalm 52. *Saturday*, Honor to parents, Matt. 15. 1-9. *Sunday*, Counsel to the young, Prov. 4. 14-27.

Authorized Version.

24 And Da'vid sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

19 Kings 9. 17.

Revised Version.

24 Now Da'vid sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, a man run-

I. THE ANXIOUS FATHER. VERSES 24-30.

24. The two gates—The heavy fortifications had probably an outer and an inner gate at the base of a battlemented tower, in which was a "chamber" (verse 33). On the flat roof of this tower, but shaded from public view, David waited to hear tidings of the battle. The outer gate was level with the city wall, and the gateway would leave some space between that and the inner. Compare Eli going out and sitting by the wayside, watching for the coming of some runner from the field of war (1 Sam. 4. 13). **The watchman**—Every gate and outpost of the tower would be guarded by vigilant watchmen at such a time. **Roof**—The flat roof of the gateway on the side of the outer wall. **Lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man**—Observe the vividness of this description.

ONE HAS SAID, EVEN OF A MOTHER'S LOVE, "Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. 49. 15). The picture of the anxious watcher at the gate of Mahanaim gives us a faint insight into the heart of the Father above. The world is full of Absaloms who have risen up against their heavenly Father. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have

Authorized Version.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, *a* Methinketh the running of the foremost is like the running

Revised Version.

25 ning alone. And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And

26 he came apace, and drew near. And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, *Me* thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running

a Heb. *I see the running.*

rebelled against me" (Isa. 1. 2). But does he cast them off? What did the woman of Tekoah say to David? "Yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him" (2 Sam. 14. 14). And what does he say of the rebellious Ephraim? "I do earnestly remember him still" (Jer. 31. 20). "When he was yet a long way off his father saw him"—there is shown the love of the divine Watcher.

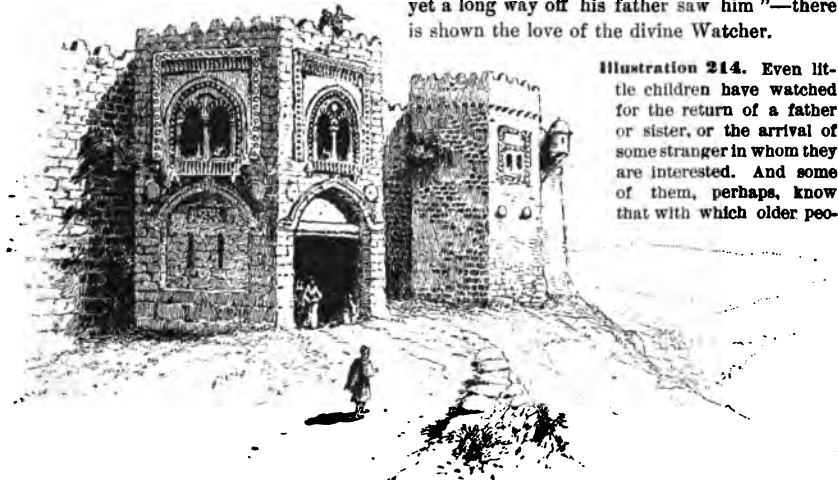


Illustration 214. Even little children have watched for the return of a father or sister, or the arrival of some stranger in whom they are interested. And some of them, perhaps, know that with which older peo-

GATE OF THE WALL—INDICATING THE DOUBLE ENTRANCE, AND THE CHAMBERS ABOVE.

ple are so well acquainted—anxious watching—the face pressed against the window, the ear strained to catch the sound of approaching wheels, or, perhaps, the listening, minute after minute, for the postman's knock. To-day we have before us the picture of an anxious watcher.

25. Watchman cried—Such a cry would be the signal of intense excitement. **If he be alone**—This remark reveals the sagacity of the old warrior. He knows that if he were a fugitive flying from a defeated army he would not be alone. **Tidings**—Still the same word, tidings of victory. The soldier-king could forecast the result well enough to know that a massacre was impossible; the worst he could suffer would be an ordinary defeat, which would have been heralded by crowds of fugitives.

26. The watchman called unto the porter—The one stood on the top of the gate tower; the other was below to attend to opening and closing the gate.

27. The running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz—So he accomplished his desire to be the first to announce the defeat of the rebellion. Whether a peculiarity of gait

Authorized Version.

of A-him'a-az the son of Za'dok. And the king said, ²He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And A-him'a-az called, and said unto the king, ³All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

29 And the king said, ⁴Is the young man Ab'sa-lom safe? And A-him'a-az answered, When Jo'ab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

30 And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

Revised Version.

of A-him'a-az the son of Za'dok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh

28 with good tidings. And A-him'a-az called, and said unto the king, ¹All is well. And he bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king. And the king said, ²Is it well with the young man Ab'sa-lom? And A-him'a-az answered, When Jo'ab sent the king's servant, ³even me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

30 And the king said, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

¹ 1 Kings 1. 42; Prov. 25. 13, 25.—² Or, Peace be to thee. Heb. Peace.—³ Heb. shut up.—⁴ Heb. Is there peace?

1 Heb. Peace.—² Heb. Is there peace with, etc.—³ Or, and.

or merely his noted swiftness identified him we cannot say. A good man—David had had proof of his fidelity during the progress of the war, and was sure that such as he would not be chosen for the thankless work of bearing bad news.

28. All is well—This in the Hebrew is one word, "Shalom," "Peace." It is a pity that we should obscure the exquisite Hebrew salutation. There is a strange irony in Absalom's name, "Father-of-peace," given in the warrior's weariness of strife to the son who brought the greatest agony. The messenger appears to have been admitted within the gate, so that he called and addressed his word directly unto the king, thus manifesting the most submissive loyalty and homage. Blessed be the Lord thy God—Compare his language in verse 19, and note his habit of viewing events with reference to God's hand in them. Delivered up—Literally, "shut in," "narrowed." Compare Psalm 31. 8; 2 Sam. 22. 20. To an oriental a feeling of narrowness, a sense of being hedged in, means distress; while prosperity is constantly compared to the being in a broad place where there is freedom to act.

29. Is the young man Absalom safe—Only the context suggests that this is a question. The words are literally, "Peace to the young man, to Absalom." Ahimaaz cried, "Peace!" and the king's reply is, "Peace to the young man, to Absalom?" Compare 2 Kings 4. 26. The father speaks as if he would excuse his son because of his youth. But in verse 32 the same words are in the form of a question. There is a tenderness in the words which reveals the yearning of the fatherly heart. He seems more anxious about the welfare of the "young man" than about the issue of the battle. "David was thinking of the ominous words, 'The sword shall never depart from thy house.' The sword had devoured one son; was it now to claim another? And then? and then? Where would it stop? And Ahimaaz saw the king's distress, and gave an evasive answer."—*R. Payne Smith*. The king's servant—The words are probably a gloss, and the true reading "sent me thy servant." Or we may conjecture, with the help of a Greek text, "There was behind me a great shout of men rejoicing among the servants of the king, when Joab sent me thy servant." I saw a great tumult, but I knew not—Thus he avoids telling what he knew would be bitter tidings for the king, leaving that part of it for "the king's servant," the Cushite, to make known. Here may be prevarication, for he kept back a part of the truth, and gave the impression that Absalom's death was unknown to him. I knew not—This may have been literally true, or it may have been an evasion, the youth's loyal affection making his heart fail him.

30. Turn aside, and stand—He has given his message, and is thus dismissed to rest after the toilsome running. He is, however, allowed to place himself near, that he may hear what further tidings the Cushite brings.

Authorised Version.

31 And behold, Cu'shi came; and Cu'shi said, 'Tidings, my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto Cu'shi, *Is the young man Ab'sa-lom safe?* And Cu'shi answered, 'The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as *that young man is*.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and

Revised Version.

31 And, behold, the Cush'ite came; and the Cush'ite said, Tidings for my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

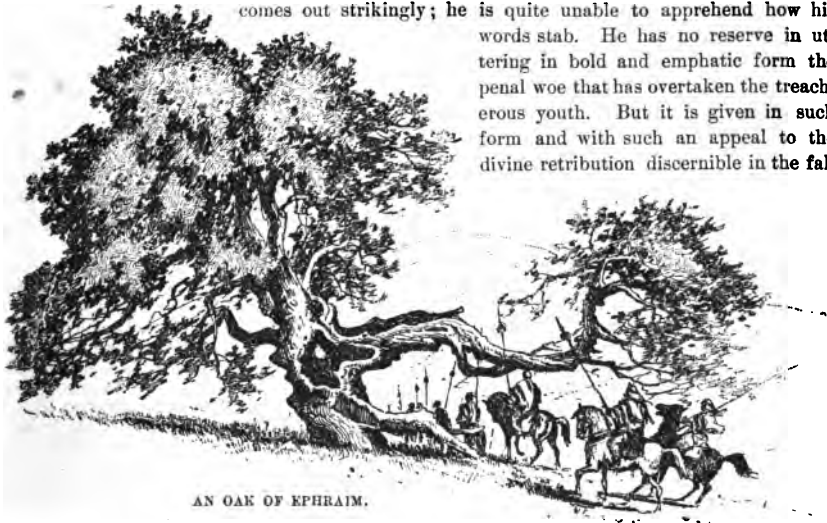
32 And the king said unto the Cush'ite, Is it well with the young man Ab'sa-lom? And the Cu'shite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and

^a Heb. *Tidings is brought*.—3 Judg. 5. 31; Psalm 68. 1, 2; Dan. 4. 19.

II. THE LOST SON. VERSES 31, 32.

31. **Tidings, my lord the king**—Better, less abruptly, "Let my lord the king receive the good tidings, that Jehovah," etc. That is, God, sitting as Judge at the assizes of battle, hath given sentence for thee, and pronounced thine acquittal. **Avenged**—He appropriates the language of Ahimaaz, as given in verse 19.

32. **The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is**—The stolidity of the slave and the alien comes out strikingly; he is quite unable to apprehend how his words stab. He has no reserve in uttering in bold and emphatic form the penal woe that has overtaken the treacherous youth. But it is given in such form and with such an appeal to the divine retribution discernible in the fall



of an impious enemy, that David has no spirit to charge anything against the messenger. "Alarm for Absalom is the dominant feeling in David's mind; and as Cushie had been sent for the very purpose, he at once communicates the news to him in words that leave no doubt of his meaning."—*R. Payne Smith*.

III. THE HOPELESS SORROW. VERSE 33.

33. **Much moved**—Thrown into violent commotion of soul. The Septuagint translates, "sore troubled," the word of John 14. 1. **The chamber over the gate**—An apartment in one of the towers of the gate; the nearest place where he could be alone. **Wept**—Loudly

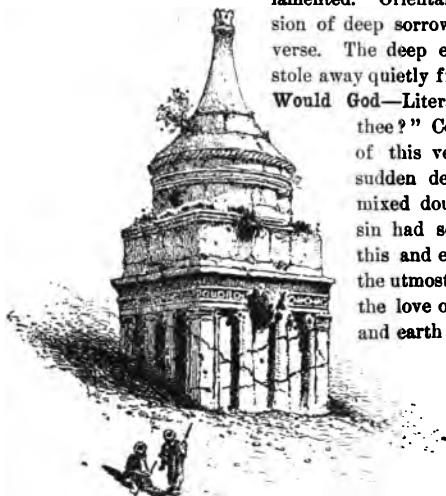
Authorized Version.

wept: and as he went, thus he said, ⁴O my son Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son Ab'sa-lom! ⁵would God I had died for thee, O Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son!

Revised Version.

wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son Ab'sa-lom! would God I had died for thee, O Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son!

⁴ Chap. 19. 4.—⁵ Psalm 103. 13; Prov. 10. 1; 17. 25.



ABSALOM'S TOMB.

lamented. Orientals have no thought of self-restraint in the expression of deep sorrow. **My son, my son**—Five times repeated in this verse. The deep emotion of his grief was pitiable, and the people stole away quietly from the place as men ashamed. See 2 Sam. 19. 3. **Would God**—Literally, “who will give me death, me in place of thee?” Comment must only weaken the unutterable pathos of this verse, revealing the anguish of the father at the sudden death of the son in the midst of his wickedness, mixed doubtless with remorse for the evil which his own sin had set before a too ready imitator. Let us read in this and every story of paternal tenderness, unquenched by the utmost ingratitude and sin, the faint earthly reflection of the love of Him “from whom every fatherhood in heaven and earth is named.” **Would God I had died for thee**—With

all the emotion of a heartbroken father there was added the thought that Absalom's ruin was in some sense a penalty for which he (David) was responsible. How terribly the words of Nathan (2 Sam. 12. 10-20) smite him now! Surely the sword has entered his own soul; would that it might have taken his life! Compare the language of Moses and Paul (Exod. 32. 32; Rom. 9. 3). David composed

several touching elegies, but none so moving as this cry over his son Absalom. This was not “composed.” It arouses sad haunting echoes like the breaking of a harp string.

Illustration 215. On the day when this is penned, May 3, 1895, an account in the morning newspaper presents another illustration of the grief of a parent over a ruined son in the case of the Governor of Kentucky, who was so heartbroken over the disgrace and death of his son that he could hardly be kept from resigning the position of governor and retiring to private life. And yesterday's paper, May 2, 1895, told the frightful story of a mother who, at her drunken, penitent son's request, brought him, as a last resort, to a New York police station, and asked the authorities to confine him for a few days, in the hope that the enforced abstinence from liquor would give him sufficient strength to enable him to live better for a while. When the formal charge had to be made, the poor woman clutched convulsively at her breast, and crying, “I cannot do it; I cannot do it,” fell dead. Such sorrow is perennial. Every year, every month, almost every day brings to our notice some new case where a heartbroken parent cries out over the ruin of fatherly or motherly hopes, “Would God I had died for thee, my son, my son!”

Illustration 216. When young people get into trouble it is not they who suffer most. It was an ordinary mother, no noted heroine, who said to the sailor when the ship containing herself and her little ones was on fire: “If you will but save my children, I will consent to be burned in that flame.” When “the bark that held a prince went down,” seven hundred and fifty years ago in the British Channel, it was the king's son who sank in a watery grave; but it was the father, Henry the Second, a king in no way noted for any excellence of character, who from that day forth “never smiled again.” The effect of our sufferings on those who love us is not to be measured or described.

Illustration 217. When a cannon has been aimed and fired, the one who has discharged it may sorrow, may reverse the aim, may bury it in the earth, but that will not undo its destructive work. So when character has wrought out its legitimate tendencies in evil conduct, mourning and repentance will not change the results of errors and mistakes. The value of an uncorrupted mind, a conscience without stain, cannot be exaggerated.

SIN AND SORROW.

1. IF ALL THE SORROW WHICH IS THE DIRECT RESULT OF SIN WERE REMOVED FROM THE WORLD TO-MORROW, HEAVENLY PEACE WOULD BE ALREADY WELL INTRODUCED. Not merely in a general theological sense is it true that death entered the world by sin, but in detail. The heartaches and headaches of to-day, the wrinkles and gray hairs, the anguish of body and mind, the deformities and diseases and lunacies—even when suffered by the innocent—are nearly all resultant from the sins of the last quarter of a century or so.

2. HE WHO CHECKS SIN LESSENS SORROW. If he convert a soul from the error of his ways, if by his vote he secure the passage of a nobler law, if by his moral bravery he make effective a law already on the statute book, if by any action of his he make it harder for the sinner to sin, he may take this comfort to his soul, that many an earthly pain has been lessened by his holy energy.

3. HE WHO LESSENS SORROW LESSENS TEMPTATION. It is one of the most awful thoughts connected with sin, that its very penalty tends to increase it. For instance, a drunkard by his criminality degrades his family and debases his children, surrounding them with circumstances which deaden their moral sensibilities, and bringing them up from infancy to a lower grade of life than he himself started out upon. Every man who goes through this world with a cheery face and a kind heart, who in the fear of God strives to lighten the sorrows of his fellows, is at the same time lessening the temptations which beset them to sin.

4. THE CAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE CAUSE OF JOY ARE ONE. Sin and sorrow are united by a bond that can never be loosened, and neither can righteousness and peace be divorced from each other. The anguish of hell is as naturally the outcome of sin as the felicity of heaven is the outcome of virtue.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

I witnessed the launching of a magnificent vessel. It stood on the stocks, decorated with flags, and bearing every promise of success. But that vessel was wrecked and lost upon its first voyage. Such a ship was Absalom.

I. Notice his **opportunities and advantages**. 1. *His princely position*; the son of the greatest king of the age. 2. *Personal attractiveness*; the handsomest young man in all the land. 3. *Agreeable manners*, that charmed and won affection, so that he was the most popular young man in the kingdom. 4. *The example and influence* of such men as David and Nathan; the wise counsel of Ahithophel, etc. What opportunities! Yet he failed! [Draw two word-pictures: Absalom in his royal chariot in Jerusalem, and Absalom lying dead in the wood of Ephraim.]

II. Notice the **causes of his failure**. 1. He failed because his father was a great man, immersed in the cares of an empire, and neglectful of the training of his family. A warning to parents not to be so close in attention to business and money making as to let their children grow away from them. Absalom was left to his mother, and she belonged to an idolatrous, heathen race. Here was one secret of his failure: *Parental Neglect*. Illustrations of men with mothers who failed to teach them aright: Agrippina, the mother of Nero; the mother of Lord Byron, etc. 2. Another cause of failure lay in his *Princely Position*. It is not in palaces that young men learn to be great. The best and the greatest grow up in adversity; for example, David, Abraham Lincoln, etc. Absalom was spoiled by being born in a palace. 3. Absalom's *Passions were Ungoverned*, and this was an element of failure in his character. [Story of Amnon's murder, etc.] Strong passions are like swift steeds, mighty when harnessed to a noble character and controlled by a powerful will; for example, Paul; but dangerous when, like Mazeppa's horse, running away with their riders. 4. *The Lust of Power* was another element leading to Absalom's failure. He coveted a throne, and fell in the attempt to win; just

TWO WAYS.	
WAY OF THE ISE	WAY OF THE ICKED
FULL OF	
LIGHT.	DARKNESS.
LEADING TO	
LIFE.	DEATH.
THE WORD OF THE LORD IS SURE.	

as the ambition of many for office has ruined them. **ILLUSTRATION:** In the Southwest is a tree called *redbud*, or "Judas tree," covered with brilliant red blossoms, but poisonous. The ground under it is sometimes covered with dead insects, which have been attracted by its fatal fragrance. 5. *The Utter Lack of Moral Principle* was another cause of failure. The man of conscience sometimes seems to be a loser, but in the end principle will be found as an important factor of success, and the lack of it an element of failure.



LESSON X.—SEPTEMBER 6.

DAVID'S LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE.—1 CHRON. 22. 6-16.

[Compare Psalm 84.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee.—Psalm 84. 4.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Not certain; but in the old age of David.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

LESSON HYMN.—

Lord of hosts! to thee we raise Here a house of prayer and praise:
Thou thy people's hearts prepare, Here to meet for praise and prayer.
Here to thee a temple stand, While the sea shall gird the land:
Here reveal thy mercy sure, While the sun and moon endure.
Hallelujah! earth and sky To the joyful sound reply:
Hallelujah! hence ascend Prayer and praise till time shall end.—*James Montgomery.*

HOME READING.—*Monday* (August 31), David's Love for God's House, 1 Chron. 22. 1-10. *Tuesday* (September 1), David's Love for God's House, 1 Chron. 22. 11-19. *Wednesday*, A good desire, 1 Chron. 17. 1-12. *Thursday*, David's thankfulness, 1 Chron. 17. 16-27. *Friday*, Generous giving, 1 Chron. 29. 1-9. *Saturday*, The joy of service, 1 Chron. 29. 10-19. *Sunday*, Sanctuary song, Psalm 84.

Authorized Version.

6 Then he called for Sol'o-mon his son, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Is'ra-el.

Revised Version.

6 Then he called for Sol'o-mon his son, and charged him to build an house for the

I. THE HOUSE. VERSES 6-8.

6. Then—When David was in old age, and Solomon was beginning his reign. **Called for Solomon**—Sent for him to the royal chamber in which David lay calmly awaiting his end. **Charged him to build a house**—As the religious interests of Israel were always nearest to David's heart, he wished them to be equally dear to his successor.

Authorized Version.

7 And Da'vid said to Sol'o-mon, My son, as for me, ¹it was in my mind to build a house ²unto the name of the LORD my God:

8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ³Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.

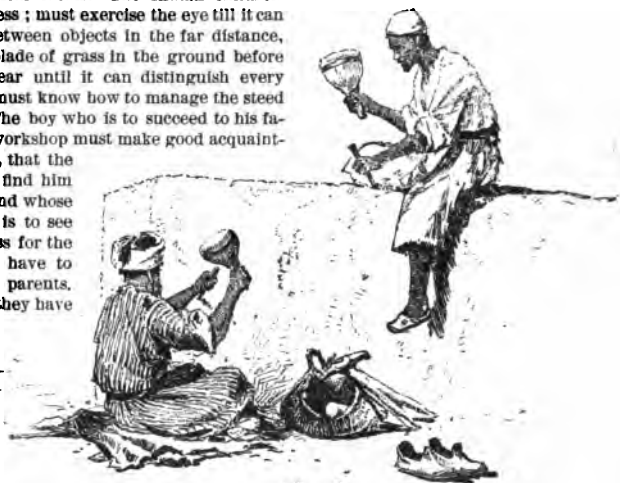
Revised Version.

7 LORD, the God of Is'ra-el. And Da'vid said to Sol'o-mon ¹his son, As for me, it was in my heart to build an house unto the ²name of the LORD my God. But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much

^{1,2} Sam. 7, 2; 1 Kings 8, 17; chaps. 17, 1; 28, 2.—³ Deut. 12, 8, 11.—⁴ 1 Kings 8, 3; chap. 28, 3.

¹ According to another reading, *My son, as for me, etc.*

Illustration 218. I have just been reading a pretty poem called, "Will the Children Save the Land?" It pictures an old Indian chieftain dying, and lamenting that he could no longer fight for or guard his country. None can comfort him until the children rise up and gather about him, promising to take up his work when he is gone; and he dies content, for he sees them in the future "rising up to save the land." But if a boy is to take his father's place, and do the work his father did, there must be good preparation made beforehand. Eminence in no line can be attained without direct effort and clear ideals. The Indian children must learn to endure hardness; must exercise the eye till it can discern and discriminate between objects in the far distance, and notice even an extra blade of grass in the ground before them; must practice the ear until it can distinguish every shade and turn of sound; must know how to manage the steed and handle the weapon. The boy who is to succeed to his father's farm or his father's workshop must make good acquaintance with them beforehand, that the day of promotion may not find him unready to step forward. And whose is the preparation? Who is to see that things are in readiness for the work which the young will have to take up? First of all, the parents. They have the knowledge, they have the foresight, they best know what is required. And so we see careful parents making every provision for the successful career of their children, sparing no pains or cost in their training and education, and laying up, when it is possible, wealth to start them on their way. Thus King David prepared the way for his son Solomon. However his elder sons, Absalom and Adonijah, may have been indulged, it is plain that Solomon was carefully trained.



TYRIAN WORKERS OF STONE.

7. It was in my mind—Very early in David's reign he had desired to build a temple to God, but had been forbidden by the prophet. **Unto the name**—*Name* is commonly put for *power and glory*. "I had in my heart to build a house in honor of God" is the meaning. **My God**—Note how constantly David keeps prominent his personal relation to God. Happy is that man who can say, "*My Lord and my God.*"

8. The word of the Lord—This does not refer to the message through Nathan (2 Sam. 7), but to some occasion not mentioned in the record. **Thou hast shed blood**—Not that this bloodshedding was wicked, for most of David's wars were necessary, and undertaken by God's command; but it was fitting that God's house should be built in a time of peace and by a man of peace. David's empire must be won and strengthened before the house of God could be safely founded. **Made great wars**—In less than thirty years the domain of Israel had been in-

Authorized Version.

9 ⁴Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him ⁵rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be ⁶Sol'o-mon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Is'ra-el in his days.

10 ⁷He shall build a house for my name; and ⁸he shall be my son, and I *will be* his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Is'ra-el forever.

11 Now, my son, ⁹the Lord be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee.

12 Only the Lord ¹⁰give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Is'ra-el, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God.

13 ¹¹Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Mo'ses with concerning Is'ra-el: ¹²be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.

Revised Version.

9 blood upon the earth in my sight: behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be ⁹Sol'o-mon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Is'ra-el in his days: he shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Is'ra-el forever. Now, my son, the Lord be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken concerning thee.

12 Only the Lord give thee discretion and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Is'ra-el; that so thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou observe to do the statutes and the judgments which the Lord charged Mo'ses with concerning Is'ra-el: be strong, and of good courage; fear not,

⁴ Chap. 28. 5. — ⁵ 1 Kings 4. 25; 5. 4. — ⁶ That is, Peaceable.
⁷ 2 Sam. 7. 12; 1 Kings 5. 5; chapas. 17. 12, 13; 28. 6. —
⁸ Heb. 1. 5. — ⁹ Ver. 16. — ¹⁰ 1 Kings 3. 9, 12; Psalm 72. 1. —
¹¹ Josh. 1. 7, 8; chap. 28. 7. — ¹² Deut. 31. 7, 8; Josh. 1. 6, 7, 9; chap. 28. 20.

⁹ That is, Peaceful.

creased from nine thousand to sixty thousand square miles, and David had won the rule over all the lands between the Nile and the Euphrates. But God's spiritual kingdom is one of peace, and brings peace on earth, good will to men.

II. THE BUILDER. VERSES 9-13.

9. **A son shall be born**—Rather, "is born;" for the prophecy was given after Solomon's birth. **A man of rest**—One who would enjoy rest and quiet, so that he could give entire attention to the building of the temple. **From all his enemies**—There were no wars during Solomon's reign, but his closing years, after his lapse into idolatry, were embittered by revolts and conspiracies. **Solomon**—More precisely, *Shelomoh*, "Peaceful." He was thus a type of the Prince of Peace.

10. **He shall build a house**—The building of the temple was the one great event of Solomon's reign. **Be my son**—This does not mean that Solomon was made a child of God irrespective of his own character, but that as king of Israel he was under God's peculiar care, while as a man he was saved or lost by his own choice. **I will be his father**—A parent's faith brings a blessing upon his children. **Establish the throne**—This promise was fulfilled in the possession of the throne by Solomon's descendants through four centuries; but especially in the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ, who was David's son according to the flesh. **Forever**—While Solomon's throne passed away the scepter of Christ is still supreme.

11. **The Lord be with thee**—Many times are we told that "the Lord was with David;" and this presence of God David now invokes to accompany his son. **Prosper thou, and build**—Solomon's prosperity was bestowed upon him so that he might execute God's plans.

12. **Wisdom and understanding**—There is nothing which requires greater wisdom than the building and care of God's cause. **Give thee charge**—Or, "give thee direction and instruction." **Keep the law**—For in no other way can the duties of a king be fulfilled than in the spirit of obedience to God's law. There is a King above the kings of earth.

13. **Then shalt thou prosper**—In the Hebrew the same word means "prosper" and "do wisely;" and either translation will fit the sense of this passage. **Be strong, and of good courage**—In the building up of God's cause there is great need of vigor and boldness.

Authorized Version.

14 Now, behold, ^bin my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron ¹⁵without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.

15 Moreover, *there are* workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and ^cworkers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.

16 Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, *there is* no number. Arise *therefore*, and be doing, and ¹⁸the LORD be with thee.

Revised Version.

14 neither be dismayed. Now, behold, in my ^aaffliction I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all men that are cunning in any manner of

16 work; of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number; arise and be doing, and the LORD be with thee.

^a Or, in my poverty. — ¹² As ver. 8. — ^c That is, masons and carpenters. — ¹⁵ Ver. 11.

^a Or, low estate.

III. THE PREPARATION. VERSES 14-16.

14. **In my trouble**—David speaks modestly of the achievements and conquests as a period of trouble or labor. **A hundred thousand talents of gold**—The *talent* was a weight, not a coin; and variously estimated at different periods and in different countries. Many writers have reckoned this sum in billions of dollars. We cannot certainly tell how much it was, but we should remember that in ancient war *all* the property of the captured was taken as spoil, and tribute upon conquered nations was oppressive. Alexander obtained a larger sum in the conquest of Persia. **A thousand thousand talents of silver**—The silver talent was worth about one thousand five hundred dollars, thus making the sum fifteen hundred millions. Possibly the numbers are incorrect, or used in a hyperbolic sense. In fact, we know almost nothing about the values of ancient money. Only this is certain, David made the gathering of treasure for the temple one of the great aims of his reign.

15, 16. **Workmen with thee**—These were mostly Tyrians, as the Israelites were farmers and not builders. **Cunning men**—Skilled mechanics. **No number**—The store was so great that it was uncounted. **Be doing**—Those who possess God's treasures are called to use them in his service.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The kingdom of Israel was peculiar in its constitution. It was not despotic, but theocratic. There was a King above the king. The supreme King was the Lord Jehovah; the deputy or viceroy was the anointed king. The relations between these two governing forces are presented in this lesson.

I. **The Lord as the Supreme King of Israel.** Israel was the only realm in the oriental world where there was a recognized authority above that of the king. 1. *The Lord chooses the kingdom*, makes it his own, and calls himself "the Lord God of Israel." Verse 6. What a privilege to be under the special care and guardianship of the Almighty. 2. *The Lord directs its policy.* Verses 7-9. He overrules the plans of its ruler, chooses its king, and decides upon the course of its affairs. Neither David nor Solomon, but the Lord, was supreme Ruler. 3. *The Lord ordains its history.* Verses 10, 11. He gives to it a career and a destiny, which is to be eternal, enduring forever, when other kingdoms pass away. 4. *The Lord enacts its laws.* Verses 12, 13. The king of Israel was expected to rule in accordance with a higher law; a law given by Jehovah through the mediation of Moses. 5. *The Lord provides its wealth.* Verses 14-16. True, the riches belonged to David, but the opportunity to obtain them was given by the Lord. The treasures were won by conquest of the tribes possessing them, and the

victory was from the Lord. 6. *The Lord gives it rest.* Verse 18. By giving it victory. The opportunities of peace were bestowed upon Israel that the house of God might be built.

II. **The King in his Relation to the Lord.** The privileges bestowed upon Solomon required certain duties on his part to the God whose subject he was. 1. *To provide for God's worship.* Verses 6-11. Solomon was charged with this as the great work of his reign; for it peace, prosperity, and riches were bestowed upon Israel. The highest aim of a nation should be to provide for the interests of religion. 2. *To know God's law.* Verses 12, 13. This, as the supreme law of the land, was to be kept by the king as well as the people; and its observance would require wisdom and understanding. 3. *To obey God's law.* Verse 13.

As Joshua was encouraged to be bold in his obedience, so Solomon would need all his courage to maintain the law which God had given. 4. *To be liberal in gifts to the Lord.* Verses 14-18. The riches had been bestowed upon Israel, its king and its nobles, for this purpose, and should be used for this end. 5. *To seek the Lord.* Verse 19. Vain would be the temple, in all its splendor, unless it represented the offering of the hearts of the people to the God in whose honor the temple rose. The "form of godliness without its power" is vain and evil.

<p>TO-DAY.</p> <p>TWO TEMPLES OF GOD.</p>	
<p><u>CHURCHES.</u></p> <p>BUILD. BEAUTIFY.</p>	<p><u>OUR BODIES.</u></p> <p>CARE FOR. CONTROL.</p>
<p>KNOW YE NOT THAT YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD?</p>	



LESSON XI.—SEPTEMBER 13.

DAVID'S GRATITUDE TO GOD.—2 SAM. 22. 40-51.

[Read chapter 22 and chapter 23. 1-23.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer.—
2 Sam. 22. 2.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

A GRATEFUL RETROSPECT.—We study this week one of the noblest hymns ever written. Psalm 18 is another form, or version, of it, with some notable variations. Like *Addison's* hymn, "When all thy mercies, O my God," this is the outpouring of a grateful heart overwhelmed by the manifold mercies of God. "The royal poet sketches in a few grand outlines the tale of his life; the record of his marvelous deliverances and of the victories which Jehovah has given him; the record, too, of his own heart, the truth of its affection toward God, and the integrity of purpose by which it had ever been influenced. Throughout that singularly checkered life—hunted as he had been by Saul before he came to the throne, and harassed perpetually after he became king by rivals who disputed his authority and endeavored to steal away the hearts of his people, compelled to fly for his life before his own son, and engaged in long and fierce wars with foreign nations—one thing had never forsaken him, the love and the presence of Jehovah. By his help he had subdued every enemy, and now, looking back with devout thankfulness on the past, he sings this great song of praise to the God of his life."—*Perowne*. The closing strains recite the covenant relationship in which David had stood to God. He had ever been a true Israelite—an Israelite in heart; therefore Jehovah, the God of Israel, girded him with strength, and made even distant nations his vassals.

ANALYSIS OF THE PSALM.—"The psalm consists of three principal divisions, or strophes, together with an introduction and conclusion: 1. Introduction, setting forth all that Jehovah is to the psalmist (verses 2-4). 2. Strophe I. The record of David's sufferings and peril and the mighty deliverance by which he was rescued (verses 5-20). 3. Strophe II. The reason for this deliverance as based upon the character of God and the principles of his moral government (verses 21-31). 4. Strophe III. The blessings which he had received in his life; his own preservation and that of his race (verse 29); help and strength in battle, rule over all enemies (verses 32-46). 5. Conclusion, consisting of a joyful thanksgiving and acknowledgment of all God's mercies (verses 47-51)."—*Perowne*. Our lesson begins with the latter part of Strophe III, which glories in the victories God has secured for his servant.

TIME.—Of the date when David wrote this psalm there can be little doubt. It was at the close of his first great series of victories, after Toi, the Hittite king of Hamath, had sent to him an embassy of congratulation (2 Sam. 8. 9, 10), referred to very triumphantly in verses 45, 46. But there is no trace in it of the sorrow and shame that clouded over his later days; and no man whose conscience was stained with sins so dark as those of adultery and murder could have written words so strongly asserting his integrity and the cleanness of his hands as are found in verses 21-25. The psalm belongs to David's happiest time, when he had won for Israel security and empire. It is written from first to last in a tone of jubilant exultation, caused, as we may well believe, by Nathan's acceptance of his purpose to build the temple and by the solemn appointment of David as the theocratic king. If it were arranged according to time and matter it would be placed immediately after chapter 8, as it is evidently David's thanksgiving for the benefits and blessings just promised to him and his seed. Such substantially is the conclusion concerning the date of this psalm reached by most modern scholars, a conclusion which has been well stated by *Dr. R. Payne Smith*. This theory can be harmonized with that of *Dr. Perowne*, given above, by supposing that in his later years David revised what he wrote in the flush of early triumph.

PSALM 18.—"The question whether the text of the psalm is more ancient or more accurate in the Book of Psalms or here has been much discussed. Both texts have internal proofs of independence and originality; in fact, it is now admitted that neither could have been taken from the other; nor are the deviations generally such as could be accounted for by inaccurate transcription. The most natural and probable explanation is that David toward the close of his reign prepared a revision for public recitation, and that we have here that revision."—*Canon Cook*. Noticeable as are the variations, however, they are not greater than what we have in successive editions of *Tennyson's* poems, for example.

THE PLANS OF PROVIDENCE.—For nearly a century the old kingdoms of the Euphrates valley and the Nile valley were in decadence. If it had not been for their temporary decay David never could have carved out his magnificent monarchy, nor Solomon secured the great wealth necessary to erect the temple at Jerusalem. It greatly enlarges one's views of the plans of Providence to note that the only time in all the history of Israel when the great powers of Assyria and Egypt were simultaneously weak, was the time when God raised up David and Solomon for the wonderful work of developing and establishing the theocracy. During David's career Jerusalem was very near to the center of the civilized world, which did not extend more than a thousand miles from the Holy City in any direction. Egypt, Assyria, and Phœnicia were the only nations which could be called civilized. The Greeks were slowly emerging from barbarism, and the commerce of the world was in the hands of the adventurous Phœnician navigators. There is every reason to believe that if the royal successors of David and the people they governed had lived up to their high and holy privileges the power of Israel would have so increased as to control the commerce and art and morals of the surrounding countries, to inspire the infantile civilization of the classic world, and to hasten by centuries the coming of Christ, and the glorious consummation of all things.

LESSON HYMN.—

Let every tongue thy goodness speak, Thou sovereign Lord of all;
 Thy strengthening hands uphold the weak, And raise the poor that fall.
 Thy mercy never shall remove From men of heart sincere:
 Thou sav'st the souls whose humble love Is joined with holy fear.
 My lips shall dwell upon thy praise, And spread thy fame abroad;
 Let all the sons of Adam raise The honors of their God.—*Isaac Watts.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (September 7), A strong Deliverer, 2 Sam. 22. 1-18. *Tuesday*, Safe trusting, 2 Sam. 22. 26-39. *Wednesday*, David's Gratitude to God, 2 Sam. 22. 40-51. *Thursday*, Joyful trust, Psalm 71. 15-24. *Friday*, God's favor enriching, Prov. 10. 22-32. *Saturday*, Confidence in God, Psalm 23. *Sunday*, Heartfelt thankfulness, Psalm 116.

Authorized Version.

40 For thou hast ¹girded me with strength to battle: ²them that rose up against me hast thou ^asubdued under me.

41 Thou hast also given me the ²necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.

42 They looked, but *there was* none to save; *even* ⁴unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

Revised Version.

40 For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle:

Thou hast ¹subdued under me those that rose up against me.

41 Thou hast also made mine enemies turn their backs unto me, That I might cut off them that hate me.

42 They looked, but there was none to save; Even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

¹ Psalm 18. 32, 39. — ² Psalm 44. 5. — ^a Heb. *caused to bow*. — ³ Gen. 49. 8; Exod. 23. 27; Josh. 10. 24. — ⁴ Job 27. 9; Prov. 1. 28; Isa. 1. 15; Micah 8. 4.

¹ Heb. *caused to bow*.

I. SUCCESS. VERSES 40-46.

40. Thou hast girded me with strength—To be well girded was to be well armed. The idiom is common to the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew languages. **Them that rose up against me**—We cannot fix too firmly in our mind the truth that David's identification with God's cause was so thorough that he was incapable of making any distinction between his enemies and the Lord's enemies. There is constant danger for the most consecrated soul that he will at times credit to the movings of God's Spirit the passions of his own heart; but there is nothing in David's history to lead us to believe that, consciously or unconsciously, he assumed for selfish purposes the authority of God. When he speaks of "them that rose up against me" he speaks of those who rose up against the Lord's people and the Church of God.

41. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies—Literally, "Thou hast given mine enemies to me [by their] neck;" that is, "Thou hast caused them to turn back before me." The same phrase is used in Exod. 23. 27, where it is more correctly rendered, "I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee." **Them that hate me** is an equivalent term to "mine enemies." "The 'new commandment' of Christianity forbids and condemns this delight in conquest."—*Payne Smith.*

42. The Speaker's Commentary holds that this verse refers to a victory over domestic enemies rather than one over the heathen. The LORD, as in other places, when spelled in small capitals, is Jehovah, and heathen would not be likely to pray to Jehovah. But it may be said, on the other hand, that the fear of Jehovah had spread among all the nations bordering on Israel, and in an emergency the heathen might call to him in terror, if not in humble faith. The famous inscription of Mesha proves that at least the name of Jehovah was familiar to the Moabites. We are not to look upon this passage as a cruel exultation over the painful overthrow of David's enemies or even of the enemies of Israel. It was a case where wicked men, striving to defeat God's plans, in fits of desperation appealed to God to help them. Self-contradictory as this course may seem, there are not lacking examples of it in modern

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
43 Then did I beat them as small ⁵ as the dust of the earth: I did stamp them ⁶ as the mire of the street, <i>and</i> did spread them abroad.	43 Then did I beat them small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the streets, and did spread them abroad.
44 ¹ Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me to be ² head of the heathen: ³ a people <i>which</i> I knew not shall serve me.	44 Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people; Thou ² hast kept me to be the head of the nations: A people whom I have not known shall serve me.
<small>⁵ 2 Kings 13. 7; Psalm 35. 5; Dan. 2. 25.—⁶ Isa. 10. 6; Micah 7. 10; Zech. 10. 5.—¹ Chaps. 3. 1; 5. 1; 19. 9, 14; 20. 1, 2, 22.—² Deut. 28. 13; chap. 8. 1-14; Psalm 2. 8.—³ Isa. 55. 5.</small>	² Or, <i>will keep</i> .

times, both in public affairs and in the private walks of life. Now, as *Spurgeon* says, "The God of heaven is not divided, and God never succors his foes at the expense of his friends. There are prayers to God which are little better than blasphemy. Shall I ask a man to wound or slay his own child to gratify my malice? How much less will Jehovah regard the cruel desires of the enemies of the Church who dare to offer their prayers for its destruction, calling its existence schism and its doctrine heresy!" The phrase **there was none to save** reminds one of what is written concerning Esau, "He found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." 1 Sam. 28. 6 is an illustration of this verse: "When Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets."

43. We cannot too often repeat that this is no expression of gratification over the physical sufferings of the nations against whom David warred. It is righteous exultation that those who were strongest in their opposition to God's kingdom had been turned by God's power into felicitous means of advance. They had been rocks and barriers in the way; they are now turned into roads and streets for passage. It is a beautiful figure of speech, though by our translation it is made to sound somewhat harsh.

44. **The strivings of my people**—"People, in the singular, means the Jewish people as opposed to 'the nations,' that is, the heathen world. The 'strivings' here referred to are the long dissensions which followed Ishbosheth's death and delayed for many years the appointment of David as king of all Israel. He now feels that the watchful care which had protected him during that dangerous period had a higher purpose than the union of the twelve tribes under one head. He was to be the founder also of that empire over the nations which symbolized the gift of the heathen world to Christ."—*Payne Smith*. David was not the first choice of all parts of the nation. And at different times in his later life sectional strife threatened the peace—once or twice the overthrow—of his kingdom; but God delivered him out of civil wars and from all serious defections. Good people should constantly thank God when their churches, leagues, and Sunday schools are not perplexed by "strivings." Unity in the bonds of peace is a great blessing. **Thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen**—Not simply had God's people come in the spirit of unity under David's jurisdiction, but, by their help and the blessing of God, Israel's king now ruled over all the neighboring kingdoms. How much of beneficence this meant we may not at first perceive. It meant the abolition of wicked laws and the prevalence of the benign law of Moses throughout Moab, Ammon, Philistia, Bashan, Syria, and on to the far limits of the Euphrates. It meant the tearing down of many idolatrous temples. It meant the substitution of high ideals for perverse and degraded ones, and a great increase of the kingdom of God on earth. The words of this verse are thus readily explained as being literally applicable to David; but they apply much more fully to our Lord Jesus Christ. **A people which I knew not**—The theocratic empire had been extended to peoples previously unknown to David. Such might be the case with Hadadezer, king of Zobah, but the phrase more especially refers to Toi and the Hittite kingdom of Hamath (2 Sam. 8. 9).

Authorized Version.

45 ^bStrangers shall ^csubmit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.

46 Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid ¹⁰out of their close places.

47 The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock; and exalted be the God of the ¹¹rock of my salvation.

Revised Version.

45 The strangers shall ²submit themselves unto me:
As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me.

46 The strangers shall fade away,
And shall ⁴come trembling out of their close places.

47 The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; And exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation:

^b Heb. *Sons of the stranger*.—^c Or, *yield feigned obedience*. Heb. *lie*. See Deut. 33. 29; Psalm 66. 3; 81. 15.—¹⁰ Micah 7. 17.—¹¹ Psalm 89. 26.

² Or, *yield feigned obedience*. Heb. *lie*.—⁴ So Psalm 18. 45. The text has, *gird themselves*.

45. As soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me—It was not from force of arms, but by the hearing of the ear, that is, because of the wide-extended fame of David's conquests, that Toi sent ambassadors to offer allegiance and presents. But such had not been always the case. In the wilderness of Judah David had had hard experiences; but the victories that God gave him there so added to his fame that soon the mere announcement of his approach caused forts to surrender. Every Christian has an experience somewhat analogous to this. The sins which threaten to quickly overthrow the Christian in his early life are by repeated mastery brought into complete control, and the victorious strength which has won this victory asserts itself in all other directions and helps a Christian man to range up to a higher average of holy living.

46. Strangers shall fade away—Like plants scorched and shriveled before the hot blast of the simoom. See Isa. 40. 7. They shall be afraid out of their close places—This also is a striking figure. Rabbi ben Ezra renders it, "They shall surrender themselves from their fortresses." Out of their mountain fastnesses the heathen soldiers, thoroughly conquered, hasten down to declare allegiance to David. Paganism in this conquered territory gradually dwindled away, and would soon have become extinct if David's successors had been as faithful to Jehovah as was he.

II. GRATITUDE. VERSES 47-51.

Now, having recalled with great gratitude his conquests in the past, and having declared his exalted confidence in God's guidance and help in the future, our sweet singer turns in the final strains of his song to adore the graciousness of his God.

47. The Lord liveth—Jehovah lives. Goliath is dead, Saul is dead, Sheba is dead, Hanun is dead; David and Joab and the rest of the heroes have grown old and soon will die; but JEHOVAH liveth—the eternal, underived, all-powerful, sympathetic God. Blessed be my rock—In primitive days of warfare a king was happy almost in proportion to the great rocks of his country, which could be turned into strong fortresses. Jerusalem and Bethlehem were such natural fortresses as these, and all David's rivals must have looked with jealous eye on the natural strength of Zion. But David says that he trusts, rather, in God as his rock and his fortress. Let others trust in earthly advantages; his confidence is in the fortress which is invisible. Exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation—In heaven the choirs are constantly singing "unto Him that hath loved us and washed us in his blood;" on earth a like gratitude should inspire the worship of God's children; and if David in his limited knowledge of divine things had such lofty gratitude as this, how much should we have!

Illustration 219. "So long as 'the Lord liveth' all will be well. Do you not see the young heirs of great estates act and spend accordingly? And why shall you, being the King of heaven's son, be lean and ragged from day to day, as though you were not worth a penny? O sirs, live upon your portion! There are great and precious promises, rich, enriching mercies; you can make use of God's all-sufficiency; you can blame none but yourselves if you be defective or discouraged. A woman, truly godly for the main, having buried a child, and sitting alone in sadness, did yet bear

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
48 It is God that avengeth me, and that 18 bringeth down the people under me,	48 Even the God that executeth vengeance for me, And bringeth down peoples under me,
49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the 18 violent man.	49 And that bringeth me forth from mine en- emies: Yea, thou liftest me up above them that rise up against me: Thou deliverest me from the violent man.
50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among 14 the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.	50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the nations, And will sing praises unto thy name.
51 15 He is the tower of salvation for his king: and sheweth mercy to his 16 anointed, unto Da'vid, and 17 to his seed for evermore.	51 5 Great 6 deliverance giveth he to his king: And sheweth loving-kindness to his anointed, To Da'vid and to his seed, for evermore.

d Heb. giveth vengeance for me, 1 Sam. 26. 39; chap. 18. 19, 31.
—18 Psalm 144. 2.—15 Psalm 140. 1.—14 Rom. 15. 9.—
16 Psalm 144. 10.—16 Psalm 89. 20.—17 Chap. 7. 12, 18; Psalm
89. 29.

* Another reading is, *He is a tower of deliverance.*—8 Heb.
salvations.

up her heart with the expression, 'God lives;' and having parted with another, still she redoubled, 'Comforts die, but God lives.' At last her dear husband died, and she sat oppressed and most overwhelmed with sorrow. A little child she had yet surviving, having observed what before she spoke to comfort herself, comes to her and saith, 'Is God dead, mother? Is God dead?' This reached her heart, and by God's blessing recovered her former confidence in God, who is a living God. So ask your fainting spirits under pressing outward sorrows, Is not God alive? Then why doth my heart die within me when my comforts die? Cannot a living God support my dying hopes?"—*Oliver Heywood's* "Sure Mercies of David."

48. It is God that avengeth me—"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." "Compare 2 Sam. 4. 9, 10. This is an important passage, as bearing upon David's repudiation of private acts of vengeance. The reference to 2 Sam. 10. 4, touching the provocation to the war of which this hymn celebrates the results, is of some value; but the statement is general; in all successes David saw retributive justice."—*Dean Johnson*.

Illustration 220. This recognition of God's immediate presence in every event was the source of much of David's success. So *Oliver Cromwell*, in a letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons, after the battle of Naseby, June 14, 1645, wrote: "Sir, this is none other than the hand of God; and to him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with him. The general served you with all faithfulness and honor, and the best commendation I can give of him is that I dare say he attributes all to God, and would rather perish than assume to himself."

49. Thou also hast lifted me up on high—The like glorious end awaits every saint. The violent man—This was King Saul doubtless, if indeed any individual was alluded to.

50. Paul cites this verse, Rom. 15. 9, as proof that the salvation of Christ belonged, in the purpose of God, to Gentiles as well as to Jews: "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." The psalm, therefore, looks beyond David. David and David's rule over the nations are but a type and image of Christ and of that spiritual kingdom which he came to establish. "David evidently speaks with a consciousness that his mission as head of the theocracy, and as such forerunner and type of Christ, was not confined to Israel: it involved the proclamation of God's might and goodness to the heathen, undoubtedly with a view to the fulfillment of the original promise to Abram (Gen. 12. 2, 3), and the extension of God's mercies to all nations. Compare Psalm 66. 4; 72. 11."—*Canon Cook*. *Thomas Playfere* says: "I admire King David a great deal more when I see him in the choir than when I see him in the camp; when I hear him singing than when I watch him fighting; for, fighting, he did overcome others, but, singing, he did overcome himself."

51. The Lord was faithful to the literal David, and he will not break his covenant with the spiritual David. David—This is the only passage in which David names himself.

Professor C. Chapman finds the following topics suggested by this passage:

1. The glory of the accomplishment of life's purpose is due to God. (1.) God has chosen us. (2.) In ourselves we are unworthy of any blessing. (3.) God provides the means by which our life's purpose is wrought out. (4.) God controls the influences that work against us.
2. The influence of success in promoting success (verse 45).
3. The accelerated influences of the spiritual world analogous to laws of motion (verse 45).
4. The inherent sense in all men of the majesty of righteousness (verse 45).
5. The power of character in extending personal influence over strangers (verse 46).
6. Foreshadowing of the final collapse of the forces of evil before Christ (verse 46).
7. The *ever-living* God the joy of the Christian amid the vicissitudes of life (verse 47).
8. The adoration of God a natural expression of the sanctified heart, and its Christian element based on an experience of his mercy (verse 47).
9. The qualities of the rock as illustrating the divine perfection (verse 47).
10. The reality of providential retribution for the oppression of the righteous and the needy as revealed in history and Scripture and seen in individuals and nations (verse 48).
11. God's various methods to bring souls into submission to Christ (verse 48).
12. The divine process of bringing souls out from embarrassing circumstances (verse 49).
13. The concurrence of divine and human action in spiritual conquests (verse 49).
14. The setting forth of the wonders of redeeming mercy before uninterested men (verse 50).
15. All the resources of the divine nature in their pledged relation to the accomplishment of the purpose of Christ, the anointed One (verse 51).
16. The inheritance of Christ's people in the resources belonging to him (verse 51).
17. The permanent character of the work of redemption (verse 51).

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

This whole chapter is David's thanksgiving psalm. It is too long for a lesson in the class, but the teacher should read it carefully, and note its tone and spirit. It breathes the narrowness of the Old Testament rather than the breadth of the New; yet the prevailing note is that of faith, recognizing **The Lord's Hand in David's Wonderful Life.**

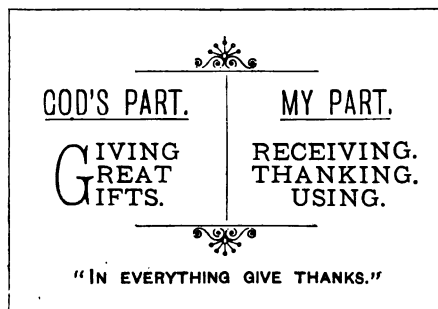
I. God giving Strength. Verse 40. Most men ascribe their success to themselves and their failure to circumstances. David sees that God has girded him with strength.

II. God giving Victory. Verses 41-43. David was a true oriental, fierce and intense. The picture of these verses is one often recorded upon the monuments of Assyria and Egypt, but with this difference: David ascribes the glory of his triumphs to the Lord God of Israel, and not to his own prowess and ability.

III. God giving Security. Verse 44. He had faced rebellion at home as well as foes abroad; but God had kept his throne secure and had enabled him to put down all strivings of

his people. It was good for God's cause that David, and not Absalom, succeeded, for the rebellion meant the domination of the lower element and not the higher.

IV. God giving Empire. Verses 45, 46. Before the reign of David Israel was a subject people, ruled by a succession of foreign masters, Canaanites, Moabites, Philistines. Under David the tribes not only became independent, but rose to a place of power. Israel for the first and only time in its history ruled all the lands between the Euphrates and the border of Egypt.



V. God giving Deliverance. Verses 47-49. Often had David's fortunes seemed to be on the verge of utter destruction—in his flight from Saul, in his foreign wars, in the rebellion of Absalom. But over all these dangers he had triumphed, for God had delivered him.

VI. God giving Gladness. Verses 50, 51. David's heart overflowed, not with self-praise, but with praise to God, who had given him success. He saw God's hand in all his career.

VII. God giving Promises. Verse 51. "To his seed for evermore." Here appears the promise in which we have an interest, for it was David's descendant after the flesh whom we adore as the King and Head of his Church.

GOOD BOOKS TO REFER TO.

Psalm 18, which, as we have seen, is another version of the psalm whose concluding portion we study this week, has been much written about. There is "An Exposition" of this psalm in "A Critical History of the Life of David," by *Dr. Samuel Chandler*. See also *Dr. John Brown's* "Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah." *Spurgeon's* "Treasury of David" is one of the most suggestive expository works on the Psalms for popular use.



LESSON XII.—SEPTEMBER 20.

DESTRUCTIVE VICES.—PROV. 16. 22-33.

[Read the chapter.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.—Prov. 16. 25.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS is a compilation from different sources, as well as a selection from the sayings of Solomon. One considerable section of the book consists of proverbs that were arranged and written out under King Hezekiah. Agur, the son of Jakeh, and a king named Lemuel are named as the authors of the last two chapters. As the Psalms of David, a collection of the noblest hymns of Israel, is named after the chief of Hebrew hymnists, so the Proverbs of Solomon is to be regarded as an anthology from the sayings of the sages of Israel, taking its name, however, from him who was the chiefest of them all.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRACTICAL LIFE.—"The Book of Proverbs approaches human things and things divine in a way quite different from the prophets of the Bible. But this is the very reason why its recognition as a sacred book is so useful. It is the philosophy of practical life. It is the sign to us that the Bible does not despise common sense and discretion. It impresses upon us in the most forcible manner the value of intelligence and prudence and of a good education. It deals, too, in that refined, discriminating, careful view of the finer shades of human character. And, above all, it insists, over and over again, upon the doctrine that goodness is 'wisdom,' and that wickedness and vice are folly."—*Dean Stanley*.

SOLOMON.—The sacred writer tells us that Solomon wrote three thousand proverbs and one thousand and five songs. All subjects then within the reach of human research were treated by him, "from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." The fame of his studies spread through all languages and religion until at last, according to the theory of certain German scholars, the very word "hyssop," which was used as a sort of title for his works on what we would call "natural history," passed into common use as the title of any book of fables in which plants and animals were made to talk and act like human beings, and, becoming known to the Greeks, reappeared in the name of *Æsop* as the

father of fabulous literature. Solomon was the inheritor of great empire and wealth, and also of an unrivaled mental grasp. His father, and with little doubt his mother also, were persons of uncommon intellectual power. He showed his wisdom, doubtless, not only by his proverbs, but by his wise selection from the traditional wisdom of the "ancients."

LESSON HYMN.—

Lord, all I am is known to thee; In vain my soul would try
To shun thy presence, or to flee The notice of thine eye.
My thoughts lie open to thee, Lord, Before they're formed within;
And ere my lips pronounce the word, Thou know'st the sense I mean.
So let thy grace surround me still, And like a bulwark prove,
To guard my soul from every ill, Secured by sovereign love.—*Isaac Watts.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (September 14), Destructive Vices, Prov. 16. 22-33. *Tuesday*, Sin and its results, Prov. 6. 6-19. *Wednesday*, Warning from the past, 1 Cor. 10. 1-13. *Thursday*, The way of folly, Prov. 12. 8-15. *Friday*, The right way, Isa. 30. 15-21. *Saturday*, Seeking strength, Psalm 119. 105-120. *Sunday*, Prayer for purity, Psalm 141.

Authorized Version.

22 ¹ Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.

Revised Version.

22 Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it:
But the correction of fools is *their* folly.

¹ Chaps. 13. 14; 14. 27.

I. WISE AND FOOLISH WORDS. VERSES 22-28.



22. Understanding is a wellspring of life

—Like a cold spring to the thirsty traveler in the desert. "A man's own common sense and prudence are a constant source of comfort, a vivifying power."—*W. J. Deane.* **Unto him that hath it**—Literally, "unto its owner." **The instruction of fools is folly**—Better, "the correction of fools." It is not plain whether this means the discipline which fools would extend over others, or the discipline they themselves receive; whether it means that fools can teach only folly, or that it is folly to correct fools. "Folly is its own punishment."—*Zöckler.*

Illustration 221. The legend of Tarquin and the sibyl will illustrate the value of wisdom, understanding, truth, which we are exhorted by another proverb to buy and to sell not. An old woman

came into the presence of King Tarquin, staggering under the load of nine great rolls of manuscript containing prophecies and counsels concerning Rome. She offered them for sale, but asked a price so high that the king hesitated to make the purchase, and said, "Wait until to-morrow." The next day she came again, but with only six books, for she had destroyed three volumes, and for these six she asked twice as much as she had before demanded for the nine. The king was so surprised that he declined to purchase, whereupon the aged woman bowed and again withdrew. Once more she came, with only three volumes, but with the requirement of a still higher price. Tarquin dared not to delay longer, and purchased the books at the cost of half his treasures. Even at this price they were worth more than he paid, for they were the guide to Roman statesmen for centuries afterward. The truth will cost more the longer we bargain, but it will always be of more value than its price.

Illustration 222. A fountain in a desert is a "wellspring of life" in more senses than one. An oasis becomes a center of tribal power, and often of civilization.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
23 ² The heart of the wise ^a teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.	23 The heart of the wise instructeth his mouth, And addeth learning to his lips.
24 Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.	24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, Sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.
25 ² There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.	25 ¹ There is a way which ² seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death.
^a Psalm 37. 30; Matt. 12. 34.— ^a Heb. <i>maketh wise</i> .— ² Chap. 14. 12.	¹ See chap. 14. 12.— ² Or, <i>is straight before</i> .

23. The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth—"The mind and thought control the outward expression."—*S. S. Taylor-Taswell*. **Addeth learning to his lips**—"Learning mounteth up to his lips."—*Delitzsch*. The writer of Ecclesiasticus, a book with which every student of wisdom should be familiar, says (21. 26), "The heart of fools is in their mouth: but the mouth of the wise is in their heart."

24. Pleasant words—Kind words, which the old song of our childhood years tells us can never die. Compare Prov. 15. 26, where "pleasant words" means "words of kindness." **Honeycomb**—Compare Psalm 19. 10. **The bones** stand for the whole body. Kind words, this proverb says, are not only delicious to one's mind, they are helpful to one's body. Good cheer antagonizes nearly every form of disease, and judicious compliments are better than medicine.

Illustration 223. The comparison of soothing words with honey is common in all languages, in all ages. Thus Homer sings of Nestor ("Iliad," 1, 246), "The smooth-tongued chief, from whose precious lips sweeter than honey flowed the stream of speech."—*Derby*. So the story goes that on the lips of St. Ambrose, while still a boy, a swarm of bees settled, portending his future persuasive eloquence. "Honey in Palestine is a staple article of food, and also a medicinal remedy."

25. This is a repetition of Prov. 14. 12. This proverb might be literally translated, "There is a way straight before a man, but the ways of death are at the end of it." Describe a road straight and beautiful, but branching out into innumerable directions, and there is no one of these branches along which you can walk without meeting Death. These proverbs are mostly detached sayings, and except where the connection between two verses is evident it is better not to assume that they are at all connected, for the compilers probably added proverb to proverb at their own convenience; nevertheless, there is a profound logical connection between the truths of verse 24 and 25. The eloquent words of the finished orator, the tender charm of the persuasive friend, the elegant periods of the polished writer, may so fascinate our judgment as to make a wrong way seem right; but no display of eloquence can make death less deadly.

THE APPARENT RIGHTNESS OF THE WAY. "1. *The fact.* It is not only said that the way of death is attractive like a smooth garden path winding among flower beds, while the way of life is a steep and rugged mountain track; but this way even seems to be right. There is an apparent justification for allowing it. Conscience is in danger of being deluded into giving it a quasi sanction. 2. *The cause.* We are always tempted to condone the agreeable. If no danger is apparent sanguine minds refuse to believe that they are approaching one. Convention simulates conscience. The multitude who tread the broad way tempt us into trusting the sanction of their example. It is difficult to believe that that is wrong which fashion encourages. 3. *The limitations.* (1) The way only 'seemeth' right. We need to be guarded against succumbing to the bondage of appearances. The question is not as to what a thing seems, but what it is. (2) It is right in the eyes of the man who is tempted to follow it. But it is not right in the eyes of God. On the other hand, it may be objected that these considerations destroy the validity of conscience; for if we are not to follow our own conscience what higher guide can we have? The answer may be threefold. (1) Seeming right may not be the verdict of our true conscience, but only the too readily accepted conclusion of more worldly considerations. (2) Conscience may be perverted. (3) We have, in Scripture and in Christ, a guide for conscience."—*W. F. Adeney*.

Authorized Version.

26 ^a He that laboreth laboreth for himself ;
for his mouth ^c craveth it of him.

Revised Version.

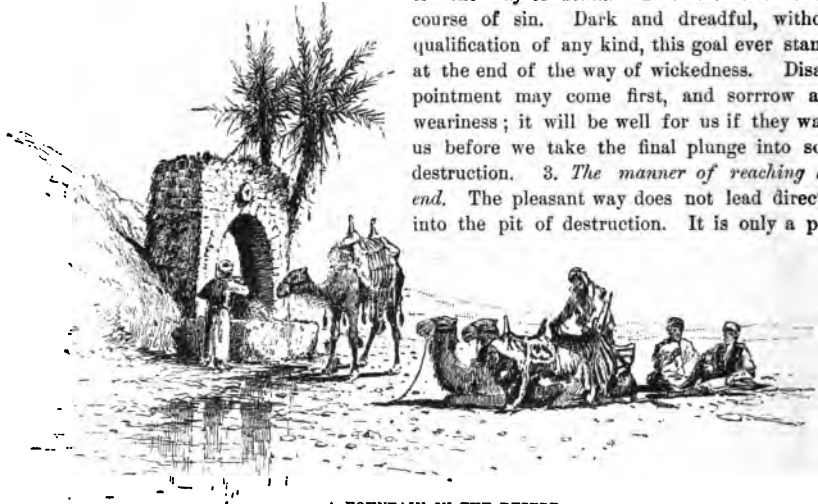
26 The appetite of the laboring man laboreth
for him ;
For his mouth ^a craveth it of him.

^a See chap. 9. 19 ; Eccles. 6. 7. — ^b Heb. *The soul of him that laboreth.* — ^c Heb. *boveth unto him.*

^a Or, *urgeth him thereto.*

THE FATAL END OF THE WAY. "1. *The importance of the end.* The great question is, Whither are we going? The purpose of a road is not to serve as a platform for stationary waiting, but to lead to some destination. It is foolish for the traveler to neglect the signpost, and only follow the attractiveness of the road, if he wishes to reach his home. In life the value of the course chosen is determined by its issues. 2. *The character of the end.* The end

is 'the way of death.' This is true of every course of sin. Dark and dreadful, without qualification of any kind, this goal ever stands at the end of the way of wickedness. Disappointment may come first, and sorrow and weariness ; it will be well for us if they warn us before we take the final plunge into soul destruction. 3. *The manner of reaching the end.* The pleasant way does not lead directly into the pit of destruction. It is only a pre-



A FOUNTAIN IN THE DESERT.

liminary stage in the downward journey. It brings the traveler to 'the ways' of death. It may be regarded as a bypath running into the broad road. There are questionable amusements and dangerous friendships that are not themselves fatal, but they incline the careless to ways of evil. They are perilous as subtle tempters fashioned like angels of light."—*W. F. Adeney.*

26. Our translation of this verse is awkward. *Dr. W. Hunter* suggests that its point and meaning may be expressed thus : "The appetite of the laborer labors for him." A good appetite spurs a man to work. A man is willing to strain muscle and brain and mind, and sacrifice much, for the gratification of his desires. *Stuart* explains the passage differently : "The appetite of the toiler is toilsome to him, it is his mouth that urgeth him on," which is a poetic way of saying that strong bodily desires are urgent and troublesome. Either meaning gives a strong truth. "All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled" (Eccles. 6. 7). "The literal meaning of this proverb is plain enough, but it is probable also that it is a 'parable' and a 'dark saying' as well. Unless there be a hunger in the soul, a craving to be fed, there can be no true labor after righteousness and wisdom."—*Plumptre.*

Illustration 224. Popular wisdom in all countries has noted the truth of this verse. The old Roman said, "Largitor artium, ingenique magister venter," which, being translated, means, "The stomach is the teacher of all-arts, the parent of invention." The French say, "De tout s'avise à qui pain faut," "He who wants bread thinks of everything." The English say, "Need makes the old wife trot." Italians say, "Hunger sets the dog a-hunting." Hunger in some sense is a great stim-

Authorized Version.

27 ^d An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips *there is* as a burning fire.

28 ^e A froward man ^e soweth strife: and ^e a whisperer separateth chief friends.

29 A violent man ^f enticeth his neighbor, and leadeth him into the way *that is* not good.

30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.

31 ^g The hoary head *is* a crown of glory, *if* it be found in the way of righteousness.

32 ^h *He that is* slow to anger *is* better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

Revised Version.

27 A worthless man ⁱ deviseth mischief: And in his lips there is a scorching fire.

28 A froward man scattereth abroad strife: And a whisperer ^j separateth chief friends.

29 A man of violence enticeth his neighbor, And leadeth him in a way that is not good.

30 ^k He that shutteth his eyes, *it is* to devise froward things: He that compresseth his lips bringeth evil to pass.

31 The hoary head is a crown of ^l glory, ^m It shall be found in the way of righteousness.

32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

^d Heb. *A man of Belial.*—^e Chaps. 6. 14, 19; 15. 18; 26. 21; 29. 22.—^e Heb. *sendeth forth.*—^f Chap. 17. 9.—^g Chap. 1. 10, etc.—^h Chap. 20. 29.—ⁱ Chap. 19. 11.

ⁱ Heb. *diggeth.*—^j Or, *alienateth his friend.*—^k Or, *He that shutteth his eyes to devise froward things, that compresseth his lips, bringeth, etc.*—^l Or, *beauty.*—^m Or, *if it be found.*

ulus to work, and our Lord in his beatitude recognizes that this same law holds in the spiritual world, that he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is sure to secure the bread of life which satisfies.

27. This and the following three verses have to do with the character and conduct of the bad man. **An ungodly man**—A man of Belial; a vile, worthless man. **Diggeth up evil**—As much as to say, he is not content with the innumerable evils that lie thickly about him, like stones in Palestine, but he diligently digs up all hidden badness. **In his lips there is as a burning fire**—As James says: "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity."

28. **A froward man**—A perverter. **Soweth strife**—Scatters quarrels through the neighborhood like seeds over a field. **A whisperer**—A tittle-tattle, a grumbling gossip.

Illustration 235. An English proverb: "Slanderers are Satan's bellows to blow up contention."

II. GOOD AND BAD DEEDS. VERSES 29-33.

29. The Septuagint translates this, "The lawless man tempts friends." **Enticeth**—Persuadeth. Compare Prov. 3. 31; 1. 10; Matt. 12. 34. **Leadeth**—Driveth.

30. **Shutteth his eyes**—He fixes his eyes. In other words, he becomes absorbed in his efforts to **devise froward things**, that is, perversities. Compare Prov. 2. 12; 6. 14. **Moving his lips**—In the East, where hardly anything is said or done or thought without picturesque gesture, the lips are often bitten as a sign of malice. **Bringeth evil to pass**—Better, "he has accomplished evil." *Conant* renders thus: "When he shuts his eyes he is devising perversities; when he bites his lips he has accomplished mischief." *Nowack* translates: "He that shutteth his eyes in order to contrive froward things, he that compresseth his lips, hath already brought evil to pass." "From such a crafty, malignant man you need not expect any more open tokens of his intentions than the shut eye and the bitten lip."—*W. J. Deane*.

31. **A crown of glory**—A glorious crown. **If it be found in the way of righteousness**—There is no "if" in the Hebrew, so that the proverb may mean that to walk in the way of righteousness will secure long life. "Gray hairs, to be a crown of glory, must be found in the way of righteousness."—*Miller*. The Book of Wisdom (4. 8, 9) has a notable saying: "Honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age."

32. Compare Matt. 5. 5; Prov. 15. 1. This is one of the most beautiful of proverbs; and it is a compliment to human nature that it seems to have originated independently in many different languages. The common sense of mankind recognizes that **he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city**.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
33 ¹⁰ The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.	33 The lot is cast into the lap; But the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.
10 Num. 26. 55; Josh. 7. 14; Acts 1. 26.	

33. The lot is cast into the lap—Better, “is cast into the bosom.” The long loose garments worn in the East are tucked up in many ways to serve as pockets. It was an ancient custom, when men were in doubt as to their proper course, to take three small stones, one bearing an affirmative answer to whatever question might be asked, one bearing a negative answer, and one without any; to throw these into the bosom or bulging pocket made by hitching up the mantle over the girdle, and then to take out one. If the uninscribed one was selected the divinity which had been appealed to had made no answer; if either of the others were selected the man felt that God had directed him according to the inscription. These little stones were the *calculi* of the Latins, from which word comes our word “calculate.” The Urim and Thummim connected with the breastplate of the high priest are supposed to have been three precious stones which were placed in this manner in the pouch behind the breastplate, on one of which stones, as already described, was engraved *Yes*, on another *No*, the third being without any inscription. The pitching of pennies is a survival of this old appeal to God for direction. “For the use of the lot see Josh. 18. 10; Judg. 20. 9; 1 Sam. 10. 20, 21; Acts 1. 24. The philosophy of the custom was in the thought that it minimized man’s agency. It excluded all partiality and chicanery and appealed directly to decision by Providence. It was employed religiously in cases where other means of decision were not suitable or available.”—*W. J. Deane*. **The whole disposing thereof is of the Lord**—The result was by the ancients regarded as a divine decision. And so it was. The only mistake they made was a mistake very similar to one generally made now, that there is here and there in the life of the devout man a *providential interference*. As if God would permit the machinery of this world to run itself until he sees that an explosion or breakdown is imminent, and then he interferes just far enough to keep his chosen ones from disaster. The germ of all infidelity lies here, because Providence is present in every incident of life, removes every difficulty, pushes up every grass blade, controls all winds and waves, and holds the hearts of all men in his hand. The use of the lot is not to be miscellaneously commended in modern times, because most of the questions which would be naturally referred to it have already been answered and finally settled by the perfect revelation of the Gospel. But the student should keep in mind the wide difference between this and that worst of all vicious devices, the *LOTTERY*, where the lot is cast not at all for divine direction, but to secure, without equivalent, money that belongs to another. “The decision by lot is very ancient. It continues to this day, and probably will continue to the end of time, for in some respects it is the best and most satisfactory (or at least the least unsatisfactory) way in which a decision can be made. Men will submit to a decision made in this manner which they would hardly yield to if made in any other.”—*Hunter*.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

This lesson consists of detached sentences, which seem to have very little connection. Yet as we study them closely, taking the **GOLDEN TEXT** as a key, we find in them references to **Four Dangerous Paths**.

I. The Way of the Thoughtless. Verses 22-25. “The correction of fools is folly” (Revised Version, verse 22). There are those upon whom counsel, advice, even discipline is wasted. They are fools, and will be fools still. And there is no fool so utterly foolish as the drunkard, who, knowing that his course leads to ruin, will still pursue it in the face of warning.

II. The Way of Appetite. Verse 26. “His mouth spurs him on to work.” Appetite which makes a man work for bread is a blessing; but that which craves strong drink is a curse.

Josh Billings says, "People smile at the folly of youth in dragging a sled up hill for the fleeting pleasure of riding down on it; but that boy is a sage beside the man who works hard all the week and then drinks up his earnings on Saturday night."

III. **The Way of the Mischief-maker.** Verses 27, 28. See these verses in the Revised Version, where the meaning is clearly presented. They refer to the one who makes trouble between man and man, either by slander, by quarrel, or by quiet suggestion of evil. He may tell nothing but the truth, and therein his way may seem to be right; yet in the end his work will be destructive. How many reputations have been ruined by a whisper, a word, or even by a look! *Æsop*, when asked, "What beast is most dangerous?" answered, "Of wild beasts, the slanderer; of tame beasts, the flatterer."

IV. **The Way of Passion.** Verses 29-32. The "violent man" is the one who is dominated by passion, prejudice, feeling, rather than by conscience. He is like *Mazeppa*, tied helpless on a wild horse, and far more likely to ride to ruin than to success. Intemperance is not mentioned in these verses, yet it is closely allied with every one of these destructive vices.

WAYS THAT SEEM RIGHT.

MAN'S WAYS.

CARDS.
WINE CUP.
PLEASURE.
AMBITION.
RICHES.

GOD SEES

CARDS.
WINE CUP.
PLEASURE.
AMBITION.
RICHES.

LOOK WITH GOD'S EYES.

"NARROW IS THE WAY WHICH LEADETH UNTO LIFE."



REVIEW OF THE THIRD QUARTER.—SEPTEMBER 27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.—Prov. 18. 10.

LESSON HYMN.—

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!
Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee, Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.
Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee, Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see;
Only thou art holy: there is none beside thee, Perfect in power, in love, and purity.—*Bishop Heber*.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (September 21), David king over all Israel, 2 Sam. 5. 1-12. *Tuesday*, The ark brought to Jerusalem, 2 Sam. 6. 1-12. *Wednesday*, David's kindness, 2 Sam. 9. *Thursday*, David's confession and forgiveness, Psalm 32. *Friday*, Absalom's defeat and death, 2 Sam. 18. 9-17, 32, 33. *Saturday*, David's love for God's house, 1 Chron. 22. 6-16. *Sunday*, David's gratitude to God, 2 Sam. 22. 40-51.

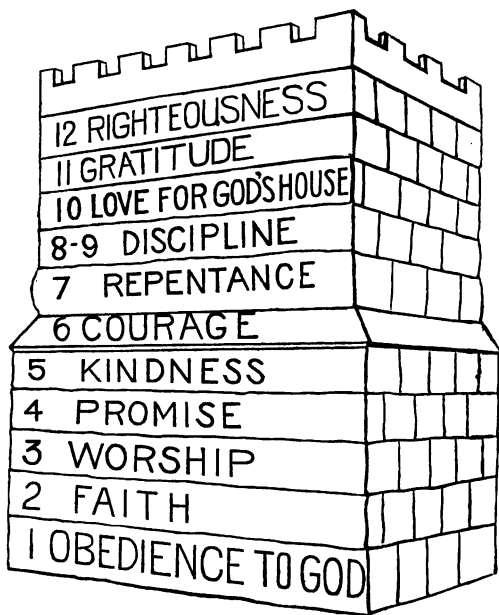
HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The lessons of the Third Quarter narrate David's history as king, and show the elements that made him great. The **GOLDEN TEXT** suggests **A Tower**, as the emblem for our Review, and we take the tower of David as our picture. What are the traits of character that are taught or urged in these lessons?

LESSON I shows David taking counsel with God concerning his plans for life. He asked God's will and followed it. Thus **obedience to God** is the first course at the foundation of the tower of David, as it is the basis of a truly successful life.

LESSON II finds its keynote in the last verse. "David perceived that the Lord had estab-

THIRD QUARTERLY REVIEW.



lished him king." He possessed the insight of faith, and attributed his success, not to his own skill or genius, but to God's care. David was ever a man of **faith**.

LESSON III presents another side of David's character. He saw that national union, peace, and prosperity must be founded upon religion. Therefore his first care, so soon as he was established upon his throne, was to provide for the **worship of God**.

LESSON IV presents God's **promise** to David. This was one of the bulwarks of his throne, often referred to and appealed to in the succeeding ages. God promised to David that his house should not be like that of Saul, but that his descendants should forever sit upon his throne. We know in what way that promise has been fulfilled.

LESSON V. Another element of David's power was his strong human sympathy. He won the love of

men by his **kindness**, of which a strong example is given in the story of Mephibosheth. Oriental monarchs have never considered it a crime to put to death even innocent men who might become rivals. David showed gentleness instead of jealousy.

LESSON VI gives the account of David's victories, and shows the **courage** which was so great a factor in his success. It was the Lord's battle which he fought, and the Lord's victory which he won.

LESSON VII. David sinned, as who does not? But David repented of his sin, made confession, and sought God. So **repentance** forms one stone in the tower of his life.

LESSONS VIII and IX show an experience of trial and **discipline** through which David passed in the rebellion of his son. In it he saw God's hand, even though it was working through the wickedness of his son. Through the trial David emerged, still believing, and with a chastened spirit of submission to God's will.

LESSON X presents a new manifestation of David's **love for God's house**, which he desired to build, and for which he made generous preparation. Loyalty to the Church of Christ is not, as many deem, a hindrance to success, but a help.

LESSON XI shows the duty and privilege of **gratitude to God**.

LESSON XII. The temperance lesson may be summed up in one word—**righteousness**, which properly crowns the tower of a successful life.

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1. THE HARAM, OR SACRED INCLOSURE AROUND THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, WHICH STANDS ON THE SITE OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE. 2. THE CAVERN UNDER "THE ROCK"—MOSQUE OF OMAR. 3. THE POOLS OF SOLOMON.

FOURTH QUARTER.

LESSON I.—OCTOBER 4.

SOLOMON ANOINTED KING.—1 KINGS 1. 28-39.

[Read chapter 1.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways.—
1 Kings 2. 3.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

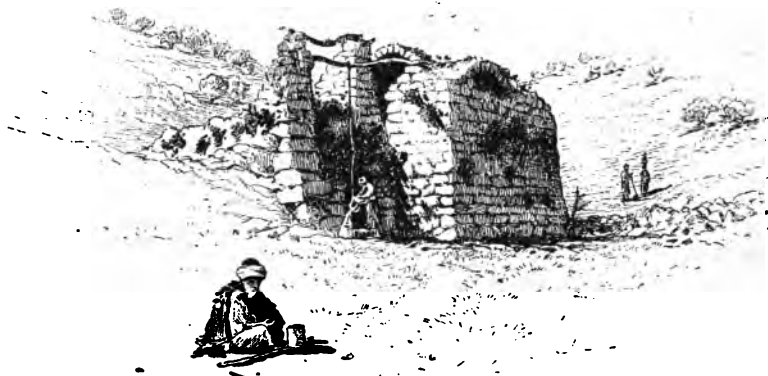
TIME.—B. C. 1015.**PLACE.**—Jerusalem.

THE BOOKS OF THE KINGS.—"In the Hebrew canon these formed one book. They follow the books of Samuel, which are also called Books of the Kings. Indeed, the whole story from the beginning of Judges to the end of Kings runs on as one unbroken narrative. First Kings takes up Hebrew history at the time when David was old and stricken in years, B. C. 1015; Second Kings ends with the beginning of the captivity of Judah in Babylon, B. C. 586, and the burning of the temple, though notice is made of the liberation and death of Jehoiachin more than twenty-six years later. The author cannot be identified. Ancient tradition, in the Talmud, names Jeremiah; some have supposed them compiled by Ezra or Baruch. The books have a very marked unity of design, plan, and style, and were first divided in the Septuagint. They are, in large measure, a compilation from older documents. They have always had a place in the Hebrew canon."—*Schaff*.

ADONIJAH'S CONSPIRACY.—Adonijah, the eldest living son of David after Absalom's death, saw that, through the influence of Nathan and Bathsheba, Solomon was likely to succeed to the throne. He conspired to make himself king during the helpless old age of David, and united with him in the plot Joab, the general of the army, and Abiathar, the high priest. At a meeting near Jerusalem the proclamation was made that Adonijah was king. But the prompt action of Nathan, and the power of Bathsheba over the aged king, brought the plot to naught before it was fairly wrought out in action. Nathan informed Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, that Adonijah was making himself king, and advised her, in order to save her own life and that of her son Solomon, to go to the king and remind him of his promise on oath that her son Solomon should be king after him, and to inquire why Adonijah had become king. If Adonijah had really got possession of the throne he would probably have put Solomon and his mother out of the way, as political opponents, according to the barbarous custom of the East.

ZOHELETH AND EN-ROGEL.—Adonijah prepares a feast "by the stone Zohelath," "which is beside En-rogel." This has been most satisfactorily identified by *M. Clermont Ganneau*, for the present Arab name *Zahweilah*, a cliff on which the village of *Silwadn* or *Siloam* stands, has almost identical meaning and form. In this village exists a rocky plateau surrounded by Arab buildings, which mark its true form and extent. The western face, cut perpendicularly, slightly overhangs the valley. Steps rudely cut in the rock enable one to climb it. By this road, dangerous as it really is, the women of Siloam come to fill their water jars at the so-called Virgin's Fountain. This rock and passage and the ledge of rock are called *Zahweilah*. The identity of the Arabic and Hebrew words is complete. The valley is called by the fellahin Pharaoh's Valley, meaning the "valley of the king." It is called "the king's garden," or "king's dale," in the Bible. The word Zohelath means "slippery," and no truer word could be found to describe this rocky ledge.

GIHON.—"David is told of Adonijah's feast both by Bathsheba and Nathan, and he orders that Solomon, accompanied by the king's bodyguard of mighty men, and riding on the royal mule, shall be taken to Gihon. This word means 'the spring-head,' and comes from a root meaning 'to burst forth.' Josephus calls it 'the fountain, outside the city.' So when the trumpet blew to announce that Solomon was king he would be in full view of Adonijah and



EN-ROGEL, THE VIRGIN'S FOUNT, TO WHICH ADONIJAH WENT IN HIS TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

his supporters, and probably only one hundred yards distant. Adonijah's guests disappear and seek their own safety, while he flies to the altar. At this time there would be but one, and that on Araunah's old threshing floor. His life is promised, and he is 'brought down from the altar,' an expression in itself which shows that from the hill of Moriah the fugitive was brought down to the king's dale. He is ordered to go to his house."—*Harper*.

ADONIJAH'S CHARACTER, which so unmistakably resembles Absalom's, is to be understood throughout as blameworthy. "He knew that the decision upon the succession to the throne depended upon his father, and that he had already selected Solomon. He knew also the tragical end of Absalom's attempt. Nevertheless, he would not be warned by it, but set himself up in the way of self-overestimation, making boast of his beautiful figure. King will he be at any cost. He makes his preparations without his father's consent, takes advantage of his infirmity and weakness, and secretly enters into combinations with the most influential men who belonged more or less to the class of malcontents. He allows himself to become impatient through his lust for ruling, and to rush into a measure in every respect premature. Upon the first intelligence, nevertheless, of Solomon's accession a shameful panic seizes him. All courage to risk the least thing for his cause fails him. The whole crowd of his followers scatter like dust, and he himself in a cowardly way seeks to save only his life. He anxiously flies to a place of refuge, clings to it, calls himself Solomon's servant, and salutes him as king. But scarcely is the danger past than he breaks his pledged word to behave quietly, and starts anew in secret machinations to reach the goal. He flatters the mother of Solomon with hypocritical humility, and seeks to move the heart of the wife. When Amnon, David's eldest son, and Absalom, eldest born after he became king in Hebron, were dead, Adonijah, also born in Hebron, became heir-apparent to the throne. But rightly does *Ewald* say of him: 'A man who, according to all the known features of our memorial of him, has much that resembles Absalom—fine form, airy, and ambitious of power, yet inwardly scarcely fit for governing; of an obdurate mind, and yet afraid to venture upon open battle. That he was no proper sovereign for such a kingdom as Israel then was must be obvious to intelligent men.'"—*Bahr*.

LESSON HYMN.—

My God, accept my heart this day, And make it always thine ;
That I from thee no more may stray, No more from thee decline.
Before the cross of him who died, Behold, I prostrate fall ;
Let every sin be crucified, Let Christ be all in all.
Let every thought, and work, and word, To thee be ever given ;
Then life shall be thy service, Lord, And death the gate of heaven !—*Matthew Bridges.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (September 28), A mother's request, 1 Kings 1. 15-27.
Tuesday, Solomon Anointed King, 1 Kings 1. 28-39. *Wednesday*, A danger averted, 1 Kings 1. 41-49. *Thursday* (October 1), David's prayer for Solomon, Psalm 72. *Friday*, A prosperous king, 1 Chron. 29. 20-30. *Saturday*, The Prince of peace, Isa. 9. 1-7. *Sunday*, Everlasting dominion, Dan. 7. 9-14.

Authorised Version.

28 Then king Da'vid answered and said, Call me Bath'she-ba. And she came ^a into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

29 And the king sware, and said, ¹ As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

30 ² Even as I swear unto thee by the LORD God of Is'ra-el, saying, Assuredly Sol'o-mon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead ; even so will I certainly do this day.

Revised Version.

28 Then king Da'vid answered and said, Call me Bath'she-ba. And she came into the king's

29 presence, and stood before the king. And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all

30 adversity, verily as I swear unto thee by the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el, saying, Assuredly Sol'o-mon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my

^a Heb. *before the king.*—¹ 2 Sam. 4. 9.—² Ver. 17.

I. THE OLD KING. VERSES 28-35.

28. King David answered—"The conduct of David when he learns what is going on corresponds fully with the divine will, and with his great calling as the founder of the theocratic kingdom and of the new dynasty which is to sit forever upon the throne of Israel. He does not stagger irresolutely hither and thither, like a sick, feeble old man without any will of his own ; but, as if he were still the strong hero, the undismayed, determined, energetic man, such as in his best years he had shown himself amid dangers and in critical situations, he raises himself from his sick bed, swears to observe his word, issues his orders, and puts them into immediate execution."—*Bahr.* **Call me Bathsheba**—"She had withdrawn from the king's presence at the entrance of Nathan, and, as we see from verse 32, he in turn retired when she was readmitted. This was done in accordance with the rules of court propriety, and also to avoid the appearance of mutual concert between them."—*Terry.*

29. The king sware, . . . As the Lord liveth—This was the commonest form of oath among the Israelites. **That hath redeemed my soul**—"Many had been David's deliverances from danger, but here, as he reaffirms this oath before that woman with whom and for whose sake he had perpetrated the darkest sins of his life, we should understand a special allusion to the bitter soul agonies which resulted from those crimes ; for it was at the time of his redemption and deliverance from those agonies that Jehovah had told him of the destiny of Solomon (2 Sam. 12)."—*Terry.*

30. I swear unto thee—We do not know when this promise of David was made, but it was doubtless made under divine direction. He proceeds at once to fulfill his promise.

Illustration 226. In the old days when the Moors had rule over Spain there lived two princes, one of whom had usurped the kingdom that ought to have been his brother's. The latter, whose name was Yusuf, was shut up in prison, where he used to beguile his time by playing chess with his friendly jailer. One day a messenger arrived at the prison with orders that Yusuf should be put to death. The doomed prince was in the middle of a game of chess, and he quietly asked for

Authorized Version.

31 Then Bath'she-ba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, ² Let my lord king Da'vid live forever.

32 And king Da'vid said, Call me Za'dok the priest, and Na'than the prophet, and Bena'iah, the son of Je-hoi'a-da. And they came before the king.

33 The king also said unto them, 'Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause

Revised Version.

31 stead; verily so will I do this day. Then Bath'she-ba bowed with her face to the earth, and did obeisance to the king, and said, Let my lord king Da'vid live forever.

32 And king Da'vid said, Call me Za'dok the priest, and Na'than the prophet, and Bena'iah the son of Je-hoi'a-da. And they

33 came before the king. And the king said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Sol'o-mon my son to

² Neh. 2. 3; Dan. 2. 4. — ⁴ 2 Sam. 20. 6.



"AND THEY BLEW THE TRUMPET."

permission to finish it before he died. Leave being granted, the game went on slowly, but at last "checkmate" was given, and the messenger demanded immediate execution. At that moment a second messenger, panting and excited, rushed in with the news that the usurper had suddenly breathed his last, and jailer and messenger fell at the feet of the man who but a moment before was doomed to die, and did him homage as their sovereign. A wonderful change—from the sword of the executioner to the throne of the land! Nor was the change that had befallen the usurper less striking—from the throne to the grave. Dark as was the lot of Yusuf at the beginning of this story, who would not prefer it to the lot of his brother? For who is there that does not believe in the saying, "All's well that ends well?"

31. Bowed with her face—Grateful for this pledge, which was without doubt the means of saving her life from the hands of Adonijah's partisans. In the Assyrian sculptures ambassadors are represented with their faces actually touching the earth before the feet of the monarch. **Let my lord king David live forever**—"This form of compliment has always prevailed in the East. See Dan. 2. 4; 3. 9; 5. 10; 6. 21; Neh. 2. 3."—*Rawlinson.*

Illustration 227. The triumph of Adonijah means loss and destruction to others. Why has Solomon alone of the sons of David not been invited to the feast? Because he is Adonijah's rival; the kingdom of right belongs to him, by the choice of God and the appointment of his father. And what will be his fate and that of his mother when King David is

no more and the usurper in full possession of the throne? We have but to call to mind the fate of Prince Arthur under his uncle King John; of the two little princes in the Tower under Richard III; of the Duc d'Enghien under the first Napoleon, and of innumerable younger brothers of Eastern potentates, sacrificed to the jealousy and fear of their relatives, to understand what a dark day had dawned for Solomon and for Bathsheba. Verses 12, 21.

32. Call me Zadok . . . Nathan . . . Benaiah—Three of the highest personages in the court, and most intimately associated with the king: the high priest, the prophet, and the chief of the bodyguard. Their presence would show that the coronation of Solomon was by David's orders. The order of the names marks the position of the persons with respect to the matter in hand.

33. The servants of your lord—The royal bodyguard. See verse 28. It is probable that these were not Israelites, but foreigners, possibly of the Philistine race, who were employed as guards to the palace; most oriental rulers are surrounded by mercenary or hired soldiers, on whose fidelity they can depend better than on their own people. Nearly all the kings of Europe have obtained their guards from among the Swiss, and it will be remembered how bravely the Swiss guard of Louis XVI of France defended their unfortunate master. **To ride upon mine**

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
Sol'o-mon my son to ride upon ^b mine own mule, and bring him down to ^b Gi'hon:	ride upon mine own mule, and bring him
34 And let Za'dok the priest and Na'than the prophet ^a anoint him there king over Is'-ra-el: and ^a blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Sol'o-mon.	34 down to Gi'hon: and let Za'dok the priest and Na'than the prophet anoint him there king over Is'-ra-el: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Sol'o-mon.
35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Is'-ra-el and over Ju'dah.	35 Then ye shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ¹ prince over Is'-ra-el and over Ju'dah.
36 And Ben-a'iah the son of Je-hoi'a-da answered the king, and said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too.	36 over Ju'dah. And Ben-a'iah the son of Je-hoi'a-da answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD, the God of my lord the
<small>^b Heb. which belongeth to me. See Ezech. 6. 8.—^a 2 Chron. 32. 20.—¹ Sam. 10. 1; 16. 3, 12; 2 Sam. 2. 4; 5. 3; chap. 19. 16; 2 Kings 9. 3; 11. 12.—² Sam. 15. 10; 2 Kings 9. 13; 11. 14.</small>	<small>¹ Or, leader.</small>

own mule—The animal set apart for the king's own use. According to the rabbis it was death to ride on the king's mule without his permission. This command was more to proclaim David's authority for the proceeding than merely to confer honor on Solomon. Mules and horses seem to have been first employed by the Israelites in the reign of David. Apparently the use of the former was at first confined to great personages (2 Sam. 13. 29; 18. 9). **Down to Gihon**—A place near Jerusalem, in the Kidron valley, near En-rogel. Modern authorities place it one hundred yards from the spot where Adonijah and his friends were feasting.

34. Zadok . . . and Nathan—It is significant that the anointing was performed by the two men representing the priestly and prophetic orders thus united around the throne; and that Benaiah as the commander of the military forces, though himself a priest by birth, had no part in the service. Solomon was in no sense to owe his crown to force of arms. **Anoint him . . . king**—It was a tradition of the Jews that the kings of David's house were anointed in succession from the same flask of oil, until the last drops were poured upon the head of Joash, the young reformer. **Blow ye**—Trumpets were used to call attention to great events and to betoken general rejoicing. They had been used by Absalom (2 Sam. 15. 10), and were afterward used by Jehu (2 Kings 9. 13) and Joash (2 Kings 11. 14).

35. Come up after him—Solomon being at the head of the procession and leading the way to the palace on Mount Zion. **Sit upon my throne**—"Solomon's reign is to be regarded as a continuation of the reign of David, his father. David's reign did not end with David's life, but it flowed on in the life of Solomon his son, for which it was a preparation. Thus the union of David and Solomon, as forming by their conjunction a typical representation of Christ, the King of the spiritual Zion, as a conqueror like David, and yet as the prince of peace like Solomon, is made more manifest."—*Terry*. **I have appointed**—David was king by divine call and popular will; Solomon, by appointment of his father; but David made the appointment as the representative of God. **Over Israel and over Judah**—This expression is but one of many indications that, through all the history, the bond of union between Judah and the other tribes was slight; and that the Judahites, on the one hand, and the Ephraimites, on the other, represented two opposite forces in the confederation of Israel. David risked his popularity in his own tribe of Judah in the endeavor to unite all the tribes, and under Solomon's successor the two diverse elements at once fell apart, forever to remain separated.

II. THE YOUNG KING. VERSES 36-39.

36. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada—Probably he spoke, not because the execution of the order depended upon him (*Bähr*), for both Zadok and Nathan had a much more important part to perform, but as a blunt soldier who was accustomed to speak his mind. **Answered the king, and said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too**—"Be it so; Jehovah, the God of your majesty, say so too."

Authorized Version.

37 ⁸ As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Sol'o-mon, and ⁹ make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king Da'vid.

38 So Za'dok the priest, and Na'than the prophet, ¹⁰ and Ben-a'iah the son of Je-hoi'-a-da, and the Cher'eth-ites, and the Pe'leth-ites, went down, and caused Sol'o-mon to ride upon king Da'vid's mule, and brought him to Gi'hon.

39 And Za'dok the priest took a horn of ¹¹ oil out of the tabernacle, and ¹² anointed

Revised Version.

37 king, say so too. As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Sol'o-mon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king Da'vid.

38 So Za'dok the priest, and Na'than the prophet, and Ben-a'iah the son of Je-hoi'-a-da, and the Cher'eth-ites and the Pe'leth-ites, went down, and caused Sol'o-mon to ride upon king Da'vid's mule, and brought

39 him to Gi'hon. And Za'dok the priest took the horn of oil out of the Tent, and

⁸ Josh. 1. 5, 17; 1 Sam. 20. 13. — ⁹ Ver. 47. — ¹⁰ 2 Sam. 8. 18; 23. 20-22. — ¹¹ Exod. 30. 23, 25, 32; Psalm 89. 20. — ¹² 1 Chron. 29. 22.

37. As the Lord hath been with my lord the king—Compare 1 Sam. 20. 13. "This phrase expresses a very high degree of the divine favor."—*Rawlinson*. See Gen. 26. 3, 4; 28. 15; 39. 2, 21; Exod. 3. 12; Josh. 1. 5; 1 Chron. 22. 11, etc. **Even so be he with Solomon,**



THE LOWER POOL OF SILOAM (PROBABLY GIHON).

and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David—"This was said from a full and honest heart, not to flatter David's vanity."—*Thenius*. "It is thoroughly characteristic of the man so far as we know him. And the prayer was fulfilled (1 Kings 3. 11, 12)."—*Hammond*.

38. According to Gesenius the Cherethites were the executioners, and the **Pelethites** the public couriers, united into the royal bodyguard; but we prefer to regard these as foreign names.

39. And Zadok the priest took a horn of oil—Hebrew "*the oil*." The "holy anointing oil" (Exod. 30. 25, 31), compounded as directed in verses 23-25, was evidently part of the furniture of the tabernacle (Exod. 31. 11; 39. 38). Eleazar was charged with its preservation (Num. 4. 16), and the rabbins say it lasted till the captivity. **Out of the tabernacle**—The tabernacle on Mount Zion, containing the ark (2 Sam. 6. 17; 1 Chron. 15. 1), must be meant here. There was not time to have gone to the tabernacle at Gibeon (*Stanley*), which was three

Authorized Version.

Sol'o-mon. And they blew the trumpet; ¹³ and all the people said, God save king Sol'o-mon.

Revised Version.

anointed Sol'o-mon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Sol'o-mon.

¹³ 1 Sam. 10. 24.

hours' distance from Jerusalem (*Keil*). Though Abiathar had charge of this sanctuary, yet Zadok would readily gain access to it, especially in the king's name. **And all the people said, God save king Solomon**—Notice the exact fulfillment of the threefold charge of verse 34 and its result. Solomon was confirmed in his office by the suffrages of the people. The great jubilation of the whole people shows that they did not believe in Adonijah's right to the throne and heartily accepted David's decision. They saw in Solomon's elevation a victory over an unauthorized usurper. The ceremony of anointing, as we have already seen, indicated that the royal office with which Solomon was to be invested was essentially theocratic.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

Solomon stands in the Bible history as a foregleam, a prophecy, **A Type of Christ**, not in his personal character, but in his official relation. As such we consider him in the spiritual application of this lesson.

I. He was the divinely chosen king. Appointed and announced before his birth. See 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13. Even his name was given by divine appointment (1 Chron. 22. 9). Toward his reign all the earlier history of the kingdom pointed. It was the culmination, "the golden age," of Israel. So Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13. 8; 1 Peter 1. 19, 20).

II. He was the promised king. Verses 28-31. To him the throne had been pledged by King David, and for him the older sons had been set aside. David's older sons had shown themselves utterly unworthy of the throne. Solomon alone had been trained up to his high inheritance; he was fit for it, and to him it had been promised. So God said, "Thou art my Son" (Psalm 2. 7).

III. He was the duly anointed king. Verses 32-34. All the authority of the realm united in the solemn consecration of Solomon as king. The king had ordered it; the priestly and prophetic orders united in the act; the commander of the army was present with his mighty men. Even so the hosts of God crown Christ as Lord of all.

IV. He was the enthroned king. Verses 35-39. He sat on David's throne, with all the emblems of royalty around him, though his enemies knew it not, and were crowning their mock king. The kings of this world do not realize that the true king of men is Jesus Christ. While Savonarola ruled Florence he caused the inscription "Jesus Christ is King of Florence" to be carved over the door of the city hall.

V. He was a victorious king. Verses 40-49. All the hostile elements fled before him and came to naught at a breath. So shall all the powers of earth yet fall before the throne of Christ.

VI. He was a gracious king. Verses 50-53. According to unvarying oriental usage, and even of modern Europe, the pretender to the throne and all his abettors should be put to death. But Solomon shows grace and mercy to his enemies when they submit to his will.

WHICH DO YOU MORE CLOSELY
RESEMBLE?

ADONIJAH. | SOLOMON.

VAIN,
SELFISH,
SELF-APPOINTED.

WISE,
LARGE-HEARTED,
CHOSEN BY GOD.

"KEEP THE CHARGE OF THE LORD THY GOD."

LINKS CONNECTING LESSONS I AND II.

The closing chapters of David's life contain some painful passages. His last messages to Solomon are hard reading. If Joab and Shimei were such criminals, surely the old king ought to have been the one to punish them. To advise Solomon to lay traps, as it were, for them, is painful to read. David is buried in the 'City of David.' Neh. 3. 15, 16, indicates his tomb as being between the pool of Siloam and the lower pool of Gihon, inside the city walls. The traditional site is one on the southern brow of Mount Zion, where stands a mosque which has not been examined for centuries, and which all Moslems revere as a holy place, considering it the true site of David's tomb. But this is very doubtful. Adonijah made a request by means of Queen Bath-sheba, which if granted would by all precedent of Eastern law have been an acknowledgment that he was rightly heir to the throne, for Eastern kings married the wives of their predecessors. Solomon sees through the scheme and orders Benaiah to execute Adonijah, while old Abiathar, David's lifelong friend, who had with Joab turned after Adonijah, is ordered to his home at Anathoth, three miles north of Jerusalem, now a half-ruined hamlet. Joab, alarmed by this display of offended authority, flies to the "tent of the Lord" on Mount Moriah. The king orders his death, but Benaiah hesitates to slay his old chief, especially in such a sacred place, and comes back for fresh instructions, and accordingly Joab is slain and the executioner is given the vacant post. Shimei is warned never to leave Jerusalem, but leaving it, Solomon, quick to find occasion, orders his death. Here we have the one-man power, used in the truly arbitrary and Eastern manner. It is with a thorough sense of relief that we turn from this sanguinary record to the more hopeful facts recorded in Lesson II.



LESSON II.—OCTOBER 11.

SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE.—1 KINGS 3. 5-15.

[*Read chapter 3.*]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.—Psalm 111. 10.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

SOLOMON.—"First Kings is, as we have seen, a continuation of the Books of Samuel, compiled at a date which may be fixed with fair certainty as between B. C. 561, the release of Jehoiachin, and B. C. 538, the edict of Cyrus. The documents used by the unknown editor seem to have been contemporary prophetic memoirs; for Solomon's reign there was a chronicle called 'The Book of the Acts of Solomon,' which the parallel, 2 Chron. 9. 29, enables us plausibly to identify with works by the prophets Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo. The keen human interest which makes the portrait of David so living fails when we come to his son. The narrative of our lesson is our only help toward realizing Solomon as anything but a splendid statue. He is best known by his works as the builder of the temple and the founder of the Jewish philosophy which dominated literature so largely after his day. A very small and uncertain proportion of his writings has come down to us, incorporated in the collection of 'proverbs.' But his name was associated with the whole class of 'sapiential' literature. Centuries later such wonderful writings as Ecclesiastes and Wisdom were given to the world as Solomon's—of course merely as written in his character—and a nearly contemporary love poem, one of the most exquisite lyrics of antiquity, was called the 'Song of Solomon.' Later legend was busy with his name. He became the great magician, invested with power over demons, and knowing all the secrets of the spirit world. We have only to do with the sober narrative of the wise king,

his power, and his splendor, and the sad fall in which we may hope he learned that the fear of Jehovah is the only object of human endeavor that is not 'vanity.'—*Moulton*.

LESSON HYMN.—

Great God, indulge my humble claim; Be thou my hope, my joy, my rest;
The glories that compose thy name Stand all engaged to make me blest.
Thou great and good, thou just and wise, Thou art my Father and my God;
And I am thine by sacred ties, Thy son, thy servant bought with blood.
I'll lift my hands, I'll raise my voice, While I have breath to pray or praise:
This work shall make my heart rejoice, And fill the remnant of my days.—*Isaac Watts*.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (October 5), Solomon's Wise Choice, 1 Kings 3. 5-15.
Tuesday, The choice of Moses, Heb. 11. 17-28. *Wednesday*, Joshua's choice, Josh. 24. 14-24.
Thursday, The excellency of wisdom, Job 28. 12-28. *Friday*, Which to choose, Deut. 30. 11-20. *Saturday*, Righteousness the first choice, 1 Tim. 6. 6-16. *Sunday*, The best knowledge, Phil. 3. 1-14.

Authorized Version.

5 ¹ In Gib'e-on the LORD appeared to Sol'o-mon ² in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

Revised Version.

5 In Gib'e-on the LORD appeared to Sol'o-mon in a dream by night: and God said,

¹ Chap. 9. 2; 2 Chron. 1. 7.—² Num. 12. 6; Matt. 1. 20; 2. 13, 19.

I. SOLOMON'S REQUEST. VERSES 5-9.



5. Gibeon was called a great city in the time of Joshua (Josh. 10. 2). It was the ancient capital of the Hivites, situated on one of the roundest of the round hills which form a noticeable feature of the country. A military man would regard it as the key of central Palestine; but its fame was as a place of worship. It is represented by the modern El-jib, a small village about five miles northwest of Jerusalem. Hither Solomon came after David's death to offer a great sacrifice to Jehovah. The Chronicler informs us that Solomon assembled a great congregation with him, and that the brazen altar made in the days of Moses by Bezaleel and the old "tabernacle of the congregation" were still existing at that place. See 2 Chron. 1. 1-6. **The Lord ap-**

peared—Solomon's mind had been uplifted by the devotions of the day, and at night his thoughts were still fixed upon the subject of his prayer, and in his visions God met him. **A dream**—The dream is noticeably prominent as one of the forms of receiving divine revelations. See Num. 12. 6; 1 Sam. 28. 6, 15. Many ordinary dreams are of a striking and impressive character, and readily suggest to us what latent possibilities of the human soul may have often served as a channel for the communication of revelations from God. **By night**—The night which followed the day of his devout offerings at the great altar. **God said**—Even in ordinary dreams the soul not only discerns what appear like visible forms, but also hears the human voice, and carries on conversation. Note the occurrence in this verse of the two divine names: "LORD" (Jehovah) appears, "God" speaks. Generally one or the other, the personal name or the universal, appears throughout a narrative, except when stress is to be laid upon the meaning. **Ask what I shall give thee**—Here was a gracious condescension and regard shown to Solomon by the Most High, which stands a monumental exhibition of par-

Authorized Version.

6 ³ And Sol'o-mon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant Da'vid my father great ^a mercy, according as he ⁴ walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou ⁵ hast

Revised Version.

6 Ask what I shall give thee. And Sol'o-mon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant Da'vid my father great kindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for

³ 2 Chron. 1. 8, etc.—^a Or, *bounty*.—⁴ Chap. 2. 4; 9. 4; 2 Kings 20. 3; Psalm 15. 2.—⁵ Chap. 1. 48.

ticular divine love to a mortal man. The doctrine of God which such grace inculcates is worthy of our careful study. God knew both Solomon's needs and his desires, but he gave him the privilege, as a test of his character and as a lesson to others.

Illustration 228. Dreams: they are the creation of a wakeful fancy which often capers fantastically when observation and reason have been overcome by sleep. God occasionally made miraculous use of them, just as he occasionally did of thunderstorms, oil jars, and baskets of loaves and fishes. It is the height of superstitious folly to interpret ordinary dreams, but this dream was a vision of God. What a man's fancy is most engaged in by day he is likely to dream of by night, and the best recipe for horrible dreams is to be found in Phil. 4. 8.

Illustration 229. There is no idea more naturally delightful to the youthful mind than that of an unlimited choice. Many have been the fairy tales built upon this idea; and children will amuse themselves (as we have all done) with the "wishbone" or merry-thought of a fowl in wishing for something, although they know perfectly well that the fulfillment of their wish is a mere dream of the imagination. We read of but one person to whom the unlimited offer was made, "Ask what I shall give thee."

Illustration 230. "I remember a little boy who, being offered his choice between three silver coins, fixed, after some deliberation, on the one of smallest value, feeling that he ought not to ask a larger gift. The difficulty lay in an uncertainty as to the intention of the person who offered them."—*S. G. Stock.*

6. Solomon said—Solomon rests his petition upon the **great mercy** which God had shown to his father, and recognizes as the noblest facts of his father's life that **he walked in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart** before God. Such grateful humility and such high appreciation of moral excellence are qualities of heart favorable to the reception of God's best gifts. We see readily how great a debtor David was, who had received from God's kind hands royal anointment, providential guidance, wise conquests, public favor, and settled empire; but some students—with David's great sins fresh in their minds—may be disposed at first to question his "truth" and "righteousness" and "uprightness of heart." Solomon's estimate of his father is nevertheless correct. A wounded soldier, who in spite of his wounds must be put in the guardhouse because of disobedience to orders, is, indeed, a sorry sight; but if he be thoroughly loyal at heart, and if his punishment help him to reform, he is immeasurably better than the most stalwart warrior, with no matter how many heroic graces, who marches and fights in the ranks of our enemy. And David, blundering and sinful as he was, always sought to be on Jehovah's side. Before Christians pass judgment upon him they should remember, (1) That the lofty moral ideal that Jesus brought to earth David never caught a glimpse of; and (2) That his rank as king lifted him high above ordinary law; and, as the general moral sentiment of the Hebrews was not higher, but lower, than his own, there was no public opinion to restrain him. None of us has yet tried to walk, as he had to walk, without moral hedges or fences of any sort. Don't be too sure how good you would be if all such restrictions were taken away. Many sins have grown difficult, and many virtues have grown easy, since David's time, for which fact we should all thank God. **Kept for him**—Prolonged for him, even after his death. **This great kindness**—The word is the same as "great mercy" in the line above, but made more emphatic by article and demonstrative pronoun. The longing love of offspring, common to all men, becomes, by its intensity, one of the dominant social forces in the Orient. The delight of founding a dynasty would, in the cases of David and Solomon, increase this love and longing, which the confident expectation of the birth of a Messiah transmuted

Authorized Version.

given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of Da'vid my father: ⁶and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* ⁷to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou ⁸hast chosen, a great people, ⁹that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

Revised Version.

him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of Da'vid my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor

⁶ 1 Chron. 29. 1. — ⁷ Num. 27. 17. — ⁸ Deut. 7. 6. — ⁹ Gen. 13. 16; 15. 5.

into a lofty religious yearning. David's recognition of God's singular mercy in giving him a son to sit on his throne is shown in 1 Kings 1. 48.

Illustration 231. Show how every young man in our time is a *king*, with an empire within himself to govern—in character, impulses, affections, and opportunities. A legend is related that once an ironworker seated himself on Solomon's throne, saying, "I am a king!" Others would have dragged him down, but Solomon said, "Let him sit on the throne, for he is a king." So every young man sits on Solomon's throne.

7. Thou hast made thy servant king—So then Solomon owed his elevation not to David, nor to Nathan, nor to Bath-sheba, nor to Zadok, nor to Benaiah (though they each took prominent part in events without which, humanly speaking, he could never have been made king), but to God, who "raiseth up one and putteth down another." And if it was God who had crowned him, why should he not claim for himself all the comfort and confidence of divine care? **Instead of David**—There is pathos here. To succeed the greatest statesman, poet, and warrior of the age was a responsibility which might well make a young man tremble. How nobly young Solomon in his humility contrasts with young Absalom and young Rehoboam! **I am but a little child**—His precise age at this time is unknown. *Josephus* says it was fourteen; modern chronologists incline to regard it as about eighteen or twenty. In 1 Chron. 29. 1 the aged David speaks of him as "young and tender." **How to go out or come in**—A popular phrase for the going about the ordinary duties of life. Compare Deut. 28. 6; 31. 2; Num. 27. 17; Josh. 14. 11; 1 Sam. 18. 13; 2 Sam. 3. 25; Psalm 121. 8. This devout consciousness of his own weakness was really Solomon's best qualification to rule.

8. In the midst of thy people—Grave problems awaited Solomon: **1.** His brothers were all possible, if not actual, candidates for the crown. **2.** The court was full of cabals and intrigues. **3.** Old heroes of the nation, such as Joab and Abiathar, were disloyal. **4.** The conquered nations were ready for instant rebellion at David's death. **5.** His kingdom was made up of two peoples who, although of close kin, were distinct in many ways—something like the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland"—and constantly pulled apart; and the jealousies between "Israel" and "Judah" must have required most delicate handling. **6.** Hebrews have through all history been alternately craven in subjection and turbulent in control; David had lifted them out of subjection and disciplined their natural turbulence into a spirit of military conquest; but now the wars were over, and the harder task remained of turning this nation of adventurers into the elevated pathways of quiet civilization. **7.** The country had within a single lifetime been turned from abject poverty into almost matchless wealth, and sudden wealth always tends to luxury and license. **8.** Idolatry was still prevalent, and the large number of foreign captives, many of whom, according to oriental usage, became mothers of Hebrew children, tended greatly to its increase. **Which thou hast chosen**—So, then, Solomon is true to the "theocracy." He is not king after all, only vicegerent under Jehovah. **A great people**—Great relative to surrounding nations—probably the most powerful kingdom of the world in that day. Compare two passages written centuries later (Amos 3. 2; 6. 1, 2). **That cannot be numbered**—This is what rhetoricians call "hyperbole."

Authorized Version.

9 ¹⁰ Give therefore thy servant an ^b understanding heart ¹¹ to judge thy people, that I may ¹² discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Sol'o-mon had asked this thing.

Revised Version.

9 counted for multitude. Give thy servant therefore an ¹ understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge 10 this thy ² great people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Sol'o-mon had asked

¹⁰ 2 Chron. 1. 10; Prov. 2. 2-9; James 1. 5.—^b Heb. *hearing*.
¹¹ Psalm 72. 1, 2.—¹² Heb. 5. 14.

¹ Heb. *hearing*.—² Heb. *hearing*.

The people had been "numbered," and there were nearly seven millions of them. But Solomon's empire included many millions of subjected foreigners also. The phrase alludes to the promise of Gen. 13. 16; 15. 5; which was now in its real meaning abundantly fulfilled.

9. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart—"Solomon showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom. The Hebrew conception of 'wisdom,' in which comprehensive word the Chronicler sums up the prayer, was a very practical one. Unlike the Greeks, whose word *sophia* meant intellectual acuteness, and often thus degenerated into mere cleverness, the Hebrews always made wisdom as much a function of heart as of head. It was the endowment which brought men safely through the problems of everyday life. Hence for the religious man 'the fear of Jehovah' was 'the beginning of wisdom,' and he was the 'fool' who presumed to rely on human weakness."—*Moulton*. **An understanding heart to judge thy people**—More exactly, "a heart hearing to judge;" that is, a wise, patient, conscientious discrimination; a judicial mind. "The Hebrews desired a king that he might judge them (1 Sam. 8. 5). Their rulers so far had been purely 'judges.' When they desired one who should lead their armies they still put his judicial functions in the first place (1 Sam. 8. 20). What were the duties of a king in this respect Absalom's words show. In verses 16-28 of this chapter we see Solomon sitting as chief justice."—*Hammond*. **That I may discern between good and bad**—That is, between right and wrong, between true and false. Compare Heb. 5. 14. "To distinguish keenly between right and wrong is a quality absolutely fundamental to righteous rule. The judge who can 'call evil good and good evil' (Isa. 5. 20), or say that 'every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord' (Mal. 2. 17), is himself a moral wreck, and involves all about him in his own ruin."—*Lange*. **Thy so great a people**—See 1 Kings 4. 20.

Illustration 232. "There is a legend which relates how King Midas wished that everything he touched might turn to gold. His desire was granted. And forthwith his couch turned to gold, and no longer gave him the needed repose: his food turned to gold, and no longer gave him the needed nourishment; his arms were changed into the same cold and lifeless metal. The wishes of many young people, could they be gratified, would prove, although less absurd, no less disastrous."—*Stock*. But there is one ambition it is always safe to cherish.

Illustration 233. A shepherd boy in the Alps, while minding his sheep, saw a strange flower at his feet. He picked it and a door opened in the hillside. He entered and found a cave piled up with gems, in the center of which sat a gnome, who said, "Take what you wish, but don't forget the best!" He dropped his flower, and loaded himself with jewels, then went out, hearing again, "Don't forget the best!" Once more in the open air he remembered his "key-flower," and turned back to pick it up; but the door was gone, and in a moment more all his gems had turned to dust! He had forgotten the best after all!

II. GOD'S ANSWER. VERSES 10-15.

10. The speech pleased the Lord—The conversation is represented as having occurred in a dream, but in the main our dreams accord with our waking thoughts, and these words evidently represented the deep, thorough choice of Solomon, waking and sleeping. The desire for wisdom is always pleasing to God. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally" (James 1. 5). Call the attention of the pupil to the interesting fact that the word Lord here appears not in small capitals (as the equivalent of the proper name Jehovah), but in ordinary type. The Hebrew word here carries the simple thought of

Authorized Version.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast ¹³ not asked for thyself ^c long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding ^d to discern judgment;

12 ¹⁴ Behold, I have done according to thy word: ¹⁵ lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none

Revised Version.

11 this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself ³ long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to ⁴ discern judgment; behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an ⁵ understanding heart; so

¹³ James 4. 3.—^c Heb. *many days*.—^d Heb. *to hear*.—¹⁴ John 5. 14, 15.—¹⁵ Chaps. 4. 29-31; 5. 12; 10. 24; Eccles. 1. 16.

³ Heb. *many days*.—⁴ Heb. *hear*.—⁵ Heb. *hearing*.

lordship; he to whom the earthly monarch now spoke was that monarch's "overlord," as they used to say in the Middle Ages—"the King of kings and Lord of lords."

11. **Hast not asked**—"Solomon's request is here estimated by what he did not ask, and its excellence is enhanced by allusion to three things which a smaller man in Solomon's place would have desired: long life . . . riches . . . the life of thine enemies."—*Terry*. 1. "Long



GIBEON.

life" is regarded as a blessing throughout the Scriptures, in spite of all the troubles of our earthly state; it was the crown of blessings to a Hebrew, whose ideas of future bliss were vague.

2. That "riches" are desirable few American boys and girls need be persuaded. 3. Desire for "the life of enemies" may seem to be unworthy any good or great man; but Jesus, who stated that he that hateth his brother is a murderer, would certainly interpret many of the most ordinary resentments of our modern life as being identical with this cruel desire. Solomon had enemies, such as Hadad and Rezon (1 Kings 11), and later Jeroboam, whose overthrow he might naturally desire. **But hast asked**—The quaintness of the phraseology in this verse is due to the repetition of the word "asked" (now for the sixth time) according to Hebrew usage. **Understanding to discern judgment**—"To hear judgment," as in verse 9. *Dr. Moulton* believes that the Hebrew phraseology in both cases shows that the "judgment" was not of Solomon's own "discerning," but directly received from God.

12. **Behold, I have done according to thy word**—"I have granted thy prayer." Such prayers are always granted. If a youth seeks with all his heart the attainment of anything worth striving for, even in business or social life, he will probably reach it; surer of success is intellectual endeavor; while in the moral and spiritual realm a man *always* finds what he sincerely seeks. **I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart**—That Solomon receives a special endowment of the judicial wisdom he specially prayed for is directly stated; and the

Authorized Version.

like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also ¹⁶given thee that which thou hast not asked, both ¹⁷riches, and honor: so that there ⁶shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

Revised Version.

that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there ⁶shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days.

¹⁶ Matt. 6. 33; Eph. 3. 20. — ¹⁷ Chaps. 4. 21, 24; 10. 23, 25, etc.; Prov. 3. 16. — ⁶ Or, *hath not been*.

⁶ Or, *hath not been*.

story which follows our lesson is told in evidence of this. In addition he was gifted with a rare genius for government, or he could never have held together the motley empire bequeathed him by his father. He was a philosopher, and spake "three thousand proverbs;" a poet, and his songs were "one thousand and five;" a naturalist, who made flowers, trees, beasts, birds, insects, and fishes objects of special study; an aesthete, whose activities were controlled by the love of the majestic and the beautiful. That he was a practical, far-sighted, sagacious statesman is evident from the commercial relations with the very ends of the earth into which he brought his people. Moses gave to them a law—which they continually disobeyed. David turned them from a nation of shepherds and farmers into a first-class military power; but they forgot all soldierly habits so soon as David was in his grave. Later, Ezra stamped himself deeply on their thought and customs; but a few centuries nearly effaced the impression he made. But Solomon *knew them better*; he turned them into merchants, jewelers, and money changers, and Solomon's stamp is on them yet; they have not forgotten the lessons he taught them, and ever since have beaten the world along those lines. **There was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee**—This comparison is enlarged upon in 1 Kings 4. 29-34. There is no need to restrict it to kings and princes, nor to cautiously admit, with the *Speaker's Commentary*, that "in the knowledge of what was in men and in the wisdom to direct men's goings, Solomon was the wisest of all mere men;" nor, either, to make unusual allowance for the glowing hyperbole of the East. Even if we had no mention of Solomon in the Bible, the legends current through all the East to-day—nearly three thousand years after his death—would mark him as one of the most marvelous intellects of history. Doubtless a thousand results of modern science and ingenuity Solomon never dreamed of, albeit the wild tales of magic in which he figures probably imply that he dealt with natural forces not then generally known, for in ancient days many a man got reputation as a magician by making what we would now call scientific experiments. The statement of our text is simply that Solomon's mind had farther reach than that of other men. Learned men of modern days stand high because of the learning of the past. They stand on that as on a pedestal. But Solomon had no pedestal. If he stands head and shoulders above so many of his fellows it is because of the rare endowment which God gave him in answer to prayer. But though his wisdom came thus from God, it was probably not acquired without patient thought and study as well as prayer.

13. I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked—A man's chief aim in life carries with it subordinate aims. A man's achievement brings in its train other achievements. When we ask for fruit God gives us a fruit tree. **Riches, and honor**—As the results of Solomon's wisdom in government his realm prospered. Foreign trade, a long period of peace, and wise administration made his reign an era of great riches. "Honor" here might better be translated "glory," and it is to be put over against the desire for the life of his enemies (verse 11) which Solomon had refrained from expressing. The glory of the oriental monarch was to have other sovereigns prostrate at his feet, and in this sense, as in others, Solomon reached "great honor." Two New Testament sayings of our Lord are suggested by the words "riches and honor:" Matt. 6. 33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," etc., and Matt. 13. 12, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." **There shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days**—We should read, "there hath not been," and the meaning is, "none hath had such prosperity as thou shalt have all thy days."

Authorized Version.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments,¹⁸ as thy father Da'vid did walk, then I will¹⁹ lengthen thy days.

15 And Sol'o-mon²⁰ awoke; and behold, it was a dream. And he came to Je-ru'sa-lem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and²¹ made a feast to all his servants.

Revised Version.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father Da'vid did walk, then I will lengthen

15 thy days. And Sol'o-mon awoke, and, behold, it was a dream: and he came to Je-ru'sa-lem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

¹⁸ Chap. 15. 5.—¹⁹ Psalm 91. 16; Prov. 2. 2.—²⁰ So Gen. 41. 7.—²¹ So Gen. 40. 20; chap. 8. 65; Esth. 1. 3; Dan. 4. 1; Mark 6. 21.

Illustration 234. "The decision for one thing often means the giving up of the rest. It was so with the merchantman in the parable when he had 'found one pearl of great price' (Matt. 13. 45, 46). It was so with the young ruler to whom Jesus said, 'Go and sell that thou hast, . . . and follow me' (Matt. 19. 21). And in asking for wisdom from above, Solomon deliberately turned his back on those things so fascinating to a young king—riches, victories, honors. God afterward bestowed these also upon him, but none the less had he, in making his choice, given them all up."—*Stock*.

14. If—There is a moral hinge on which every blessing of God swings. Divine favors and promises release no man from the obligations of righteousness. Perhaps the most precious promises of all which David received touching his royal seed is, "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men" (2 Sam. 7. 14). **To keep my statutes and my commandments—**To maintain and develop the Mosaic ritual and traditions, and thus help to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. **As thy father David did walk—**As we have seen, David sometimes staggered and wobbled; but he always kept in God's way; he always sought to maintain Jehovah's statutes and commandments; he never forgot that he was second to Jehovah in the government of the nation. **Then I will lengthen thy days—**This promise connects with the "if" with which the verse begins. But Solomon did not, like his father, walk in God's ways and keep God's statutes. He may have been in many ways a more "proper" and moral man, but he was not so sincere and whole-hearted in his service of Jehovah. So this promise was forfeited; Solomon's days were not of unusual length; he can hardly have been more than sixty at the time of his death.

15. It was a dream—That is, the vision was seen and the voice was heard while Solomon slept; but it was as real a message from God as if it had come in waking hours. The vision faded, the reality remained. **He came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord—**Amid the prosaic realities of waking life he carried out the holy thoughts he had cherished during sleep. This journey back to Jerusalem to engage in worship there is notable; it was taken immediately after Solomon had finished his offerings at Gibeon, the older sanctuary of the people. Now he offers burnt offerings and peace offerings which were accompanied by joyful feastings of the people, and thus inaugurates his reign by religious rejoicings. The burnt offerings, wholly consumed, were expressive of entire consecration; the peace offerings, of which a part was eaten before the altar, were indicative of communion with God. **All his servants—**The great train of guardsmen and followers who accompanied him to and from Gibeon.

WHAT SOLOMON'S DREAM MEANS TO US.

1. THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF WISDOM EMBRACES SOUND MORAL SENSE AND RELIGIOUS INTEGRITY.
2. GOD'S TENDER INTEREST IN MAN LIES AT THE BASIS OF THIS LESSON. In view of it we should cultivate a holy confidence and comfort.
3. BLESSINGS WHICH GOD DOES NOT RATE HIGH ARE GIVEN CONDITIONALLY. Riches and health, beauty and long life are not promised to all comers. "All real good will God bestow," but what we think most desirable may be bad for us. "E'en crosses from his sov-

eign hand are blessings in disguise." So that prayers for temporal blessings must always include the proviso, "If it be thy will."

4. **GREAT BLESSINGS GOD GRANTS UNCONDITIONALLY.** Pardon of sin, perfection in holiness, divine wisdom, daily providence; such priceless endowments may be had for the asking.

5. **THE GREATEST PROMISES INCLUDE ALL THE OTHERS.** Solomon found it so. God having given his Son to die for us, "how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Many men miss the highest good by praying only for the lower blessings. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss."

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

We, like Solomon, are kings; for to every man God bestows a kingdom: (1) In mental powers; (2) In opportunity; (3) In influence. Solomon in this lesson shows what a king needs for success in his rule, and we need the same elements of character.

I. **Recognition of God.** Solomon went to Gibeon to worship God as the supreme head of Israel. Thereby he publicly recognized God as his sovereign. So should every young man do, confessing himself a Christian.

II. **Contact with God.** Verse 5. God came to Solomon, and Solomon came seeking God. Thus there was communion between the King and a king. There is a story of an ancient wrestler, Antæus, who was invincible so long as his feet touched the earth. We are safe so long as we are in touch with God.

III. **Humility.** Verses 6, 7. A young man and a king, Solomon looks at himself with distrust, for he sees what weakness is in himself and what dangers surround him. Humility is the chief grace, because it leads the man who distrusts himself to look to God in faith, and in confidence in God he is strong.

IV. **Wisdom.** Verses 8, 9. Solomon showed his wisdom in asking for wisdom, and, seeking, he found it. The young man of to-day, surrounded by temptations, with practical questions of duty to meet, with perplexities concerning the true principles of conduct, with only one life to live, and that life requiring all his powers, needs wisdom. And it is to be obtained where Solomon sought it, from God.

V. **Obedience to God.** Verse 14. The young man needs a guide in life, for he is sailing an unknown sea, upon a voyage which he can make but once. God revealed to Solomon the only true principle of conduct, obedience to the will of the Supreme. Would that Solomon had followed the counsel!

VI. **Consecration to God.** Verse 15. The burnt offering expressed on Solomon's part a surrender of himself to God, shown in the sacrifice laid on the altar and wholly consumed, entirely given up to God. So let every young man offer himself, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, his reasonable service.

MY RESPONSIBILITY.	
I MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN	
PLEASURE, RICHES, POWER.	WISDOM.
MY DUTY.	
I MUST BE	
WILLING INTENT SANCTIFIED EVER PRAYERFUL	} TO DO GOD'S WILL.
"WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING."	

1 not have levels beyond what includes these ^{Revealed}
 2 the greatest blessing in prayer is unconditionally

LESSON III.—OCTOBER 18.

SOLOMON'S WEALTH AND WISDOM.—1 KINGS 4. 25-34.

[Read the whole chapter.]

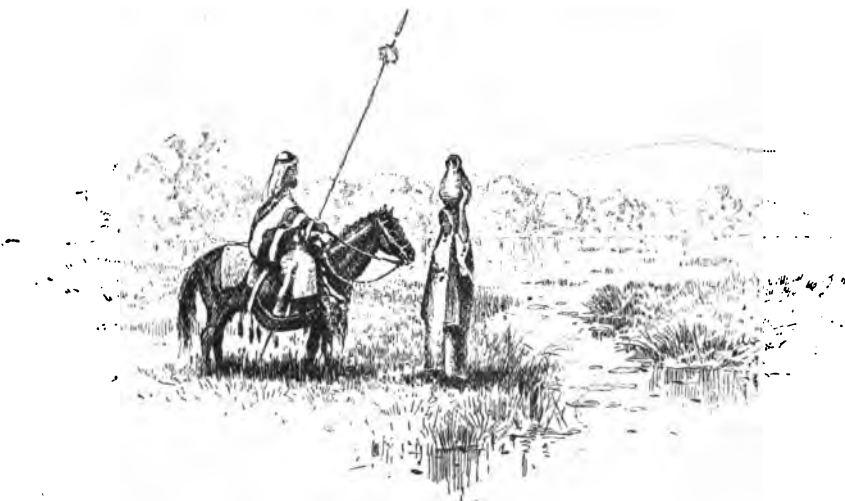
GOLDEN TEXT.—Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.—1 Sam. 2. 30.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—B. C. 1014.

PLACE.—Palestine; especially Jerusalem.

SOLOMON'S DOMINIONS.—In verse 24 we are informed that Solomon "had dominion over all the region on this side the river;" that is, west of the Euphrates toward Palestine; "from Tiphshah," that is, Thapsacus, on the west side of the river Euphrates, where Cyrus crossed in the expedition of the ten thousand; "to Azzah," that is, Gaza, one of the five famous cities of the Philistines toward the south of the Holy Land; "over all the kings on this side the river," which seems to show, what is otherwise very plainly indicated, that David and Solomon had not dethroned all the conquered kings or broken up national distinctions. Solo-



DAN (NORTHERN EXTREMITY OF THE HOLY LAND).

mon bore much the same relation to these kings that the Queen of England, as Empress of India, bears to various native monarchs under her sway. We have noted indications that there was under both David and Solomon such a division between Hebrews of the north and Hebrews of the south as may find some analogy in the phrase "Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland." In 1 Kings 2. 32 Abner is alluded to as captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa captain of the host of Judah. When Joab numbered the people (2 Sam. 24. 9) the census of the two hosts was given in separately. The strife which took place about David's return after the death of Absalom (2 Sam. 19. 41-43, and also the first verse of our lesson) is another evidence that the true view of the dominions of David and his son Solomon is that of the "united

kingdom" of Israel and Judah, with the surrounding principalities turned into a sort of feudal dependencies.

THE LUXURY OF SOLOMON'S PALACE.—Verses 22 and 23 describe "Solomon's provision for one day as thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl." "Roebucks" may have been gazelles. "Fatted



BEERSHEBA (SOUTHERN EXTREMITY OF THE HOLY LAND).

fowl" were swans (*Ewald*), or guinea hens (*Thenius*), or geese (*Gesenius*), or capons (*Kimchi*). According to the rabbins a measure contained nearly forty-five gallons; according to *Josephus*, nearly eighty-seven gallons. So according to one estimate Solomon's dependents consumed about one thousand three hundred and fifty gallons of fine flour daily; according to the other, about two thousand five hundred and ten gallons, and twice as much meal (*Lumby*). "*Bunsen* reckons twenty-eight thousand pounds of baked bread, and concludes that the number of persons provided for was fifteen thousand. The lists of oriental courts include many persons, and the provisions are put on record here because Solomon's court surpassed in size and magnificence all rivals. In it were included a harem of one thousand women, thousands of servants, and a great bodyguard. Besides, the families of all court officials were sustained by the king, and payments of salary were often made in provisions. There are similar accounts of expenditure at other oriental courts. *Tavernier* reckons the number of sheep daily consumed in the seraglio of the sultan, in his time, at five hundred, besides fowls and other food."—*Philippon*.

FROM SOLOMON'S STUDIES we may learn: "1. Never to be afraid of the teachings of natural science. Geology, botany, astronomy are as really the ministers of God as is their sister science theology, and everything that we can learn about the works of God in his book of nature will help us to interpret his words as written in the book of revelation. 2. Never become absorbed in pursuits which are merely intellectual. The soul of man needs more than his intellect can win. The suggestions of nature should be used as the witness of God. 3. Never neglect the wonderful works of God. Many a frivolous life would be redeemed from vacuity and mischief if young people were trained to observe and take interest in the habits of animal life and the marvels of inanimate existence. Let the fragrant lilies and golden harvest fields speak to us of our Father in heaven."—*Rowland*.

LESSON HYMN.—

Be it my only wisdom here, To serve the Lord with filial fear, With loving gratitude :
Superior sense may I display, By shunning every evil way, And walking in the good.
O may I still from sin depart ; A wise and understanding heart, Jesus, to me be given :
And let me through thy Spirit know To glorify my God below, And find my way to heaven.

—*Charles Wesley*.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (October 12), Solomon's Wealth and Wisdom, 1 Kings 4. 25-34. *Tuesday*, Wisdom's invitation, Prov. 8. 13-21; 32-36. *Wednesday*, The source of wisdom, Psalm 119. 97-104. *Thursday*, Insufficiency of worldly wisdom, 1 Cor. 1. 20-31. *Friday*, True glory, Jer. 9. 12-24. *Saturday*, God-given wisdom, Dan. 1. 11-20. *Sunday*, Spiritual wisdom, 1 Cor. 2. 1-13.

Authorized Version.

25 And Ju'dah and Is'ra-el ¹dwelt a safely, ²every man under his vine and under his fig tree, ³from Dan even to Be-er'she-ba, all the days of Sol'o-mon.

26 And ⁴Sol'o-mon had forty thousand stalls of ⁵horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

Revised Version.

25 And Ju'dah and Is'ra-el dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Be-er'she-ba, all the

26 days of Sol'o-mon. And Sol'o-mon had ¹forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

¹See Jer. 23. 6.—^aHeb. confidently.—²Micah 4. 4; Zech. 3. 10.—³Judg. 20. 1.—⁴Chap. 10. 26; 2 Chron. 1. 14; 9. 25.—⁵See Deut. 17. 16.

1 In 2 Chron. 9. 25, *four thousand*.

I. SOLOMON'S WEALTH. VERSES 25-28.

25. Judah and Israel—Clearly marked off from one another. See note on Solomon's Dominions in BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON. **Dwelt safely**—Most of us are accustomed to dwell safely, and would be astonished if sudden war should devastate our homes. It is startling to recall that until the present century few people in any country reached the age of maturity without suffering from the terrors of war. **Every man under his vine and under his fig tree**—A proverbial description of peace and prosperity. See 2 Kings 18. 31; Micah 4. 4; Zech. 3. 10; and for the opposite see Joel 1. 12 and Hab. 3. 17. The soldiers of the East, in invasions and raids, almost always cut and carry off the crops and fruits. **Wordsworth** notices that grape vines often cluster on the walls of houses (Psalm 128. 3) and over the court-yards, while the fig tree is a favorite of the fields; so that the happy Hebrew of Solomon's time was safe equally at home and abroad, in repose and in exercise. **From Dan even to Beersheba**—The two extremities of the land. See Judges 20. 1; 1 Sam. 3. 20; 2 Sam. 3. 10; 17. 11; 24. 2, 15; 1 Kings 4. 25; 1 Chron. 21. 2; 2 Chron. 30. 5. **All the days of Solomon**—Later generations must have looked back to this age as to a sort of Edenic existence; for Solomon was hardly dead before the nation was ruptured, the dependencies rebelled, and invaders desolated the land. Indeed, the trouble began while he was still on the throne.

26. Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots—In 2 Chron. 9. 25, the number of stalls is given as four thousand. Already the pampered monarch was transgressing the law of Moses, which especially forbade horses and chariots (Deut. 17. 16). Four thousand horses would supply the full team of three to twelve hundred chariots, and the smaller team of two to two hundred. The number four thousand is in due proportion to the twelve thousand horses for cavalry, and is in accordance with all that we know of the military establishments of the time and country. Shishak the Egyptian king brought only twelve hundred chariots into the field (2 Chron. 12. 3); Zerah the Ethiopian had but three hundred (2 Chron. 14. 9); Hadadezer had one thousand (2 Sam. 8. 4); the Syrians of Mesopotamia had seven hundred (2 Sam. 10. 18).—*Lord Arthur Hervey*. **Twelve thousand horsemen**—The chariots and horsemen were placed in garrison in various cities (1 Kings 10. 26). It seems strange at first to follow the record of prevalent peace with the statement of such vast preparations for war as we here have, but we must remember that the exhibition of pomp is one of the characteristics of Eastern monarchs, and these horsemen and chariots were of service for state and dignity; besides, they doubtless had their uses in overawing the tributary kings; many of whom were restless and unwilling subjects.

Authorized Version.

27 And ⁶those officers provided victuals for king Sol'o-mon, and for all that came unto king Sol'o-mon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing.

28 Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where *the officers* were, every man according to his charge.

29 And ⁷God gave Sol'o-mon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that *is* on the seashore.

30 And Sol'o-mon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children ⁸of the east country, and all ⁹the wisdom of E'gypt.

Revised Version.

27 And those officers provided victual for king Sol'o-mon, and for all that came unto king Sol'o-mon's table, every man in his month: they let nothing be lacking. Barley also and straw for the horses and swift steeds brought they unto the place ²where *the officers* were, every man according to his charge.

29 And God gave Sol'o-mon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore.

30 And Sol'o-mon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east,

⁶ Ver. 7. — ⁷ Or, mules, or, swift beasts, Esth. 8. 14; Micah 1. 13.
⁸ Chap. 3. 12. — ⁹ Gen. 25. 6. — ¹⁰ See Acts 7. 22.

² Or, where he (that is, the king) was. Or, where it should be.

27. This verse may at first seem to be out of connection, but it is not. The Hebrew reader would understand that cavalry when in action would subsist on the grain of the land over which it galloped. But how could these horses and horsemen be maintained? The answer is in this verse. They depended upon the imperial purveyors. **Those officers**—Referring to the twelve mentioned in verses 8-19. "Each provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in the year made provision." The stations of these men were in different parts of the country, and each had to gather through the year contributions in kind from the district assigned to him, for the royal household for one month. **They lacked nothing**—They let nothing be missing. The whole empire was divided into twelve great parts, each of which by turn provided meat for the enormous consumption of **king Solomon's table**.

28. **Barley**—Oats are not grown in the East. **Dromedaries** are camels such as we see occasionally in our own land. The dromedary is of finer and more elegant form than the Bactrian camel, has but one hump, and is trained for greater speed. The Hebrew word, however, means *swift couriers*, and is translated by many scholars *race horses*. These horses, if horses indeed be meant, were used by the king's messengers or posts to carry his mandates rapidly to the end of his dominions. **The place where the officers were**—The true meaning seems to be that they brought the provender to the horses or dromedaries, where these were, that is, to the military cities where they were lodged. **Every man according to his charge**—Each man by turn.

II. SOLOMON'S WISDOM. VERSES 29-34.

29. **Largeness of heart**—Great capacity. The heart is used for the intellect by the sacred writers. **As the sand that is on the seashore**—A proverbial expression for multitude and vastness (Gen. 22. 17; 32. 12; 41. 49; Josh. 11. 4; Judg. 7. 12; 1 Sam. 13. 5; 2 Sam. 17. 11; 1 Kings 4. 20; Psalm 78. 27). The various descriptive phrases of this verse, "wisdom," "understanding," "largeness of heart," indicate the variety and scope of his talents, which were brought to our notice in the last lesson. He was master of all subjects which attracted the attention of the ancients.

30. **Excelled**—Exceeded. **The wisdom of all the children of the east country**—Or, "the wisdom of the Beni Kedom." According to *Professor Rawlinson* this was a distinct tribe which occupied both sides of the Euphrates along its middle course (Gen. 29. 1; Judg. 6. 3, 33; 7. 12; 8. 10). They were mostly nomads, and dwelt in tents (Jer. 49. 28, 29). Job belonged to them (Job 1. 3), as did probably his three friends, and perhaps Balaam (Num. 23. 7). They must have been either Arabs or Arameans. We see in the Book of Job the character of their wisdom. It was expressed principally in detached thoughts, proverbial phrases, but included some knowledge of natural history. But other authorities believe that the phrase is employed

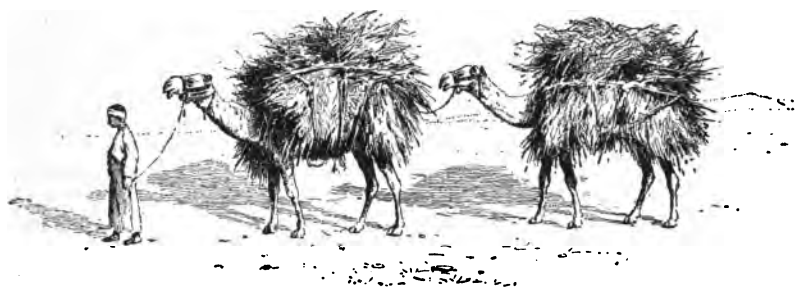
Authorized Version.

31 For he was ¹⁰ wiser than all men: ¹¹ than E'than the Ez'ra-hite, ¹² and He'man, and Chal'col, and Dar'da, the sons of Ma'hol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

Revised Version.

31 and all the wisdom of E'gypt. For he was wiser than all men; than E'than the Ez'ra-hite, and He'man, and Cal'col, and Dar'da, the sons of Ma'hol: and his fame was in

¹⁰ Chap. 3. 12.—¹¹ 1 Chron. 15. 19; Psalm 89, title.—¹² See 1 Chron. 2. 6; 6. 38; 15. 19; Psalm 88, title.



DROMEDARIES.

to designate all the Arabian tribes east or southeast of Palestine, Sabceans, Idumeans, Temanites, Chaldeans. Compare Jer. 49. 7; Obad. 8. The principal reason for believing that the Beni Kedem were a distinct tribe is that their land is identified with Haran, or Mesopotamia, in Gen. 29. 1, 4; and that the mountains of Kedem (Num. 23. 7) are evidently the mountains of Aram. They are distinguished from the Amalekites and the Midianites in Judg. 6. 3, 33; 7. 12; 8. 10. Astrological investigation added much to their fame. *Dr. Lumby* calls attention to the reported visit of Pythagoras to Arabia, whence he is said to have derived some of the precepts of his philosophy. From the "far east" came the wise men to Bethlehem when Christ was born (Matt. 2. 1). **All the wisdom of Egypt**—"The wisdom of Egypt" was of a very different kind; it was scientific rather than proverbial (Isa. 19. 11, 12; 31. 2, 3; Acts 7. 22); it included magic (Gen. 41. 8; Exod. 7. 11), geometry, medicine (*Herodotus*), astronomy, and natural history.

31. He was wiser than all men—Not that he knew more facts than any man who has arisen to eminence in scholarship since his day, but that, among all the sages of whom this writer had heard, Solomon was preeminent. **Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol**—What a comment on fame it is that the four men to whom the writer of this record promptly refers as the wisest men of history, the men whose names would stand proverbially for incarnated wisdom, are utterly forgotten! No one can say certainly who any of them was. The Bible student will remember that Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah, widow of his first two sons, afterward bore to the patriarch himself two sons, named Pharez and Zerah. 1 Chron. 2. 6 gives as follows the names of the sons of Zerah, "Zimri, and *Ethan*, and *Heman*, and *Calcol*, and *Dara*," which last named many manuscripts give as it is here given, Darda. Naturally, many have suggested that the four sages here mentioned were the grandsons of Judah; but Ethan is here distinctly said to be an Ezrahite, and Chalcol and Darda are said to be the sons of Mahol. Those who believe that these wise men were the grandsons of Judah call attention to the close resemblance in the Hebrew language of the words Ezrahite and Zerahite, and also to the fact that the word Mahol means pipe or dance, and they are disposed to interpret it "sons of the pipe," that is to say, "musicians." Then, too, the use of the indefinite phrase "sons" is notable, and these four men may be registered in 1 Chron. 2 simply as descendants of Zerah. Quite as interesting, David had two prece-

Authorized Version.

32 And ¹³ he spake three thousand proverbs: and his ¹⁴ songs were a thousand and five.

33 And he spake of trees, from ¹⁵ the cedar tree that is in Leb'a-non even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

Revised Version.

32 all the nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs 33 were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Leb'a-non even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of

¹³ Prov. 1. 1; Eccles. 12. 9. — ¹⁴ Cant. 1. 1. — ¹⁵ Num. 24. 6; Kings 19. 23; Psalm 92. 12

tors, or leaders of singing, named Ethan and Heman, who are called Ezrahites in the titles of Psalms 89 and 88. But against this is the fact that David's singer is said to be the son of Kishi (1 Chron. 6. 44), of the family of Merari, which makes him a Levite and not a descendant of Judah at all; while Heman the singer, who is called the king's "seer" (1 Chron. 25. 5), is said to be a son of Joel and grandson of the prophet Samuel, and one of the Kohathite Levites (1 Chron. 15. 17). Against this objection again it is urged that, if we are to understand by "sons of Zerah" (1 Chron. 2. 6) sons in the strict sense, there is no suggestion anywhere that they were men of unusual wisdom, while on the other hand David's singer and seer were certainly men of genius, and may have been famous for "wisdom" as well. Then, too, Levites are sometimes spoken of as belonging to other tribes when they have become thoroughly identified with those tribes. Compare Judg. 17. 7 with 1 Sam. 1. 1. But yet, according to all natural interpretation, we must assume that the "sons of Zerah" mentioned in 1 Chron. 2. 6 were his immediate and natural descendants. We have spoken of this problem at length simply to emphasize the fact that these four men, prominent for wisdom in their day, and probably for generations afterward, are now utterly vanished from human memory. **His fame was in all nations**—It reached, as we shall shortly see, to the Queen of Sheba.

32. He spake three thousand proverbs—In the Book of Proverbs we have less than one thousand of these wise sayings attributed to the great king. If the Book of Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon, it would add possibly one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty; so that in any case the great bulk of Solomon's wisdom has perished. The Hebrew proverb was very different from the modern proverb in form and purpose. It was a wise comparison or parable, a condensed extract of wisdom. The ancient parable maker exactly reversed the method of modern writers of books. He condensed the original thought of years into one sentence; they expand the last bright remark they found in some newspaper into several hundred pages. **His songs were a thousand and five**—It is not certain that one of these compositions is given to us. Solomon's Song, Psalm 72, Psalm 127, and Psalm 128 have all been attributed to him, with how much of reason we do not know. Probably much of his writing was not of a religious character, and consequently did not become part of the sacred scriptures of the Jews. The first and second Psalms have generally been attributed to him. The Septuagint makes the number of Solomon's songs to be five thousand.

33. He spake of—Probably he wrote, though the word may mean merely that he discoursed upon. If the existing writings attributed to Solomon are really his, "he had a delicate appreciation of the beauties of nature and a habit of minute observation."—*Professor Rawlinson*. Whether Solomon treated **trees, beasts, fowl, creeping things, and fishes** descriptively, so as to bring them under the head of natural history, or used them in parables as hooks to hang his wisdom on, or discussed their medical virtues and habits, we cannot say. The history of literature in all nations shows that usually the earliest works on plants have treated their medicinal properties. The allusion to the wisdom of Egypt in verse 30 has led many to infer that Solomon became the great ancient authority in natural history. **The cedar tree that is in Lebanon** was the most magnificent tree known to the Hebrew, the extreme of dignity and splendor in the vegetable world. **The hyssop that springeth out of the wall** was at the other extreme. The plant referred to here was probably a miniature variety of hyssop, contemptible

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
34 And ¹⁶ there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Sol'o-mon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.	34 fishes. And there came of all peoples to hear the wisdom of Sol'o-mon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

¹⁶ Chap. 10. 1; 2 Chron. 9. 1, 23.

in size and form. The four divisions into which the animal kingdom falls in this text are thoroughly parabolical. As we saw in our last lesson, Jewish and Mohammedan writers alike abound in the wildest accounts of Solomon's dominions and gifts. *Josephus* leads the story-telling column.

34. There came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon—Better, "of all peoples," "of all nations." **From all kings of the earth**—That is, messengers, ambassadors came, as in the case of Hiram (1 Kings 5). One queen, however, came in her own person. See chapter 10.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

These verses and their connections give us **An External View of Solomon's Empire.**

I. His Realm. Verses 21-24. For one brief period the boundaries of Israel filled out the prophetic declaration in Josh. 1. 4. The prophecy had waited four hundred years for its fulfillment; but the promise was verified during Solomon's reign. Israel extended from the border of the Nile to the border of the Euphrates, from the sea to the Arabian desert. It was the largest and most powerful empire of that age, and might well be taken as a symbol of the all-conquering kingdom of God.

II. His Reign. Verse 25. It was a peaceful reign, no wars intervening. But the peace was not such as Switzerland has enjoyed in Europe, the peace of obscurity. It was the peace of strength and power, such as America now enjoys. There is a sense in which the kingdom of God brings a sword and a fire; but another and deeper sense in which it is a kingdom of peace. The subjects of Christ possess a peace that Solomon's servants never knew.

III. His Riches. Verses 26-28. There was abundance in Israel, and a royal state, splendidly supported, in the palace. The close student might ask whence came all this wealth, and would find that it proceeded from the plunder of conquered nations, from tribute, from a monopoly of trade, and, toward the last, from taxation of the people; not so with the glory and riches of Christ's kingdom. God's Church is rich to-day, and will be richer to-morrow, from the grateful gifts of those who have received its blessings. A wealthy man was once criticised for giving too largely. He said, "The Church found me a drunkard in the gutter. All that I have I owe to it; and I propose to repay a little of what I owe."

IV. His Large-heartedness. Verse 29. There was in Solomon a breadth of view far beyond that of his people and his age. Perhaps he was too broad, so that his liberality degenerated into laxity, both in morals and in worship. Perhaps he believed in the brotherhood of man and the unity of religion so strongly as to forget the distinction between the world and the Church, and between true worship and idolatry.

V. His Wisdom. Verses 30-34. In literature, in poetry, in science, and in practical sense, Solomon rose to a lofty height and won an enduring position. Notice in the collection of his proverbs that he gave the first place to "the fear of

GOD GAVE	
TO SOLOMON	TO US
WISDOM	A SAVIOUR
AND ADDED	
WEALTH HONOR POWER POPULARITY LONG LIFE	"THE LIFE THAT NOW IS, AND THAT WHICH IS TO COME."
"HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS."	

the Lord." See Prov. 1. 7. Homer and Solomon are almost the only authors of three thousand years ago that are still read; but for one who reads Homer there are a thousand who read Solomon.

VI. **His Fame.** Verses 31, 34. He was the central figure of his own age; he stands in the Bible as the synonym for splendor and riches; and throughout all oriental lands in history and legend his name is celebrated; for example, in the stories of the "Arabian Nights."



LESSON IV.—OCTOBER 25.

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.—PROV. 1. 1-19.

[Read Prov. 1. 1-33.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.—Prov. 1. 10.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.—*Dr. W. J. Deane* gives the following plausible conjectural history of the book as we have it: "From what is said of Solomon's remarkable wisdom, and from what we know of the form which philosophy assumes in the East, we might expect proverbial wisdom from Solomon. If he set himself seriously to instruct his people, to train them in sound views of life, and in the practice of virtue and religion, he would embody his views in terse and pithy sentences, charming the imagination, and easy to be remembered. This he doubtless did, and his words were religiously preserved. The precedent he thus established was followed by other sages, and thus in addition to the proverbial lore which is accumulated in every nation by the experience of ages, there grew up a gradually increasing store of maxims of a higher order than the vulgar sort, which was enshrined in carefully balanced sentences, and handed down as a precious heirloom to succeeding generations. These considerations account for the composite character of the Book of Proverbs. Many minds and many ages have been concerned in the collection. It has suffered from interpolation, transposition, addition; various editors have arranged and rearranged the materials before them; some passages reflect the golden age of Israel's monarchy; some belong to such times as that of Jeroboam. When the men of Hezekiah made their collection there existed already a body of maxims known as Solomon's. It is not to be supposed that Solomon sat down and deliberately composed a Book of Proverbs such as we now possess. It is said that he *spoke* three thousand proverbs. He must have had scribes and secretaries who collected the wisdom that flowed from his lips. This naturally formed the nucleus around which accretions gathered in the course of time."

DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK.—The collection of Proverbs is divided by various supercriptions into at least nine parts or smaller books. The phrase "The Proverbs of Solomon," chapter 1. 1, is repeated at chapter 10. 1; "The Words of the Wise" is a title of the new section at chapter 22. 17; chapter 24. 23 begins with "These Things also Belong to the Wise;" at chapter 25. 1 we have "Proverbs of Solomon, which the Men of Hezekiah . . . Copied Out;" at chapter 30. 1, "The Words of Agur;" at chapter 31. 1, "The Words of Lemuel;" and, lastly, the acrostic ode on The Virtuous Woman. It is impossible to tell at this distance of time how many of the proverbs came directly from Solomon's lips or pen. The whole book is in the Hebrew rhythmical in its construction, and is so printed in our Revised Version. But Hebrew poetry does not depend at all on the sort of rhythm familiar to readers of English blank verse, and less still on rhyme. Its great feature is parallelism, the balancing of thought against thought, corresponding in form, and even in sound, so that one line is an echo of the others.

THE PREFACE.—The first verse of our lesson is a Title for the book, and the next five are a Superscription, which furnishes us in concise language an epitome of the scope of the book, and points out its utility both to the immature and the wise, furnishing prudent rules of conduct for the first, and congenial “proverbs” or recondite sayings for the second class of readers.

LESSON HYMN.—

My son, know thou the Lord, Thy father's God obey;
 Seek his protecting care by night, His guardian hand by day.
 Call, while he may be found; Seek him while he is near;
 Serve him with all thy heart and mind, And worship him with fear.
 If thou wilt seek his face, His ear will hear thy cry;
 Then shalt thou find his mercy sure, His grace forever nigh.—*Robert C. Brackenbury.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (October 19), The Proverbs of Solomon, Prov. 1. 1-19. *Tuesday*, The way of understanding, Prov. 2. 1-9. *Wednesday*, Better than rubies, Prov. 8. 1-11. *Thursday*, Wisdom and folly, Prov. 10. 1-14. *Friday*, Looking to the end, Prov. 14. 1-12. *Saturday*, Rejecting reproof, Prov. 15. 1-12. *Sunday*, Good and evil, Prov. 15. 20-33.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
1 The ¹ Proverbs of Sol'o-mon the son of Da'vid, king of Is'ra-el;	1 The proverbs of Sol'o-mon the son of Da'-vid, king of Is'ra-el:
2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;	2 To know wisdom and instruction; To discern the words of understanding;

¹ 1 Kings 4. 32; chaps. 10. 1; 25. 1; Eccles. 12. 9.

I. THE SEARCH FOR WISDOM. VERSES 1-6.

1. The Proverbs—A proverb is a short, pithy statement of an important practical truth, generally in metaphorical or illustrative language. Proverbs are found in all languages, and are quoted by all mankind; but none more wise were ever given than those contained in this book. **Of Solomon**—It is not stated that all the proverbs in this book were written by Solomon, though many of them were. The book itself was edited in the reign of Hezekiah, three centuries after Solomon. It is to be noticed that Solomon's sins receive no countenance from his own writings. He spoke as a wise man, though he acted like a foolish man. **The son of David**—The greatest glory of Solomon was in the fact that he was the son of the king who was faithful to God and inheritor of his covenant. **King of Israel**—From his position he could enjoy a wide outlook over society and study life in many of its phases. The proverbial or parabolic form of teaching was a recognized mode of instruction among the Hebrews, and in the Christian Church is recommended by Clement of Alexandria.

Illustration 235. Illustration of a proverb in “extract of meat,” of which a small jar will contain the concentrated essence of many pounds, “condensed milk,” etc.

2. To know—The design of the book is stated in these verses, to the end of the sixth. It is, in brief, to give training and guidance to the thoughtful but untrained character. **Wisdom**—This word is employed in this book to mean that state of mind and character which chooses the right and the best. “An intelligent piety” would be its equivalent meaning. **Instruction**—Literally, “chastisement,” meaning education, or moral training; the practical side of wisdom. **Understanding**—The power to distinguish right from wrong, and true wisdom from the false. “To perceive the words of understanding” is literally “to discern the words of discernment.”

Illustration 236. When a man is preparing to start on a journey or a tour through civilized parts, there is one thing he takes care to provide himself with, a small volume which will tell him his route, the various means of locomotion, the times at which train or steamer may be expected at any

Authorized Version.

3 To ²receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and ^aequity;

4 To give subtilty to the ³simple, to the young man knowledge and ^bdiscretion.

5 ⁴A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Revised Version.

3 To receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness and judgment and equity;

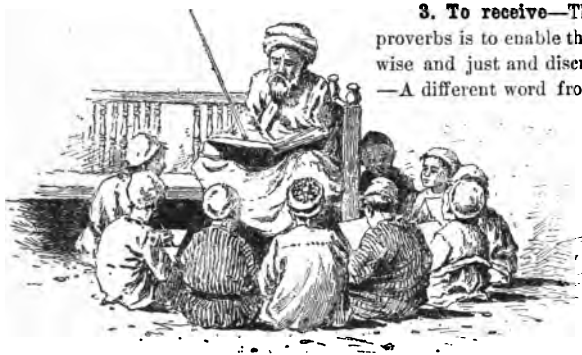
4 To give ¹subtlety to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion:

5 That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning; And that the man of understanding may attain unto sound counsels:

^a Chap. 2. 1. 9.—^a Heb. *equities*.—^b Chap. 9. 4.—^b Or, *advice*.—^c Chap. 9. 9.

¹ Or, *prudence*.

place, and also furnish him with all kinds of useful information concerning the places for which he is bound. This "Guide" is his close attendant, his trusted counselor, and his valued companion. According to its instructions his course is shaped; in all difficulties it is consulted; it is the literature about which he cares most. It is one of the great advantages possessed by a modern traveler over those of former years, that his course is so carefully mapped out, so that he knows beforehand what to look for and what to expect. And this advantage he owes to those who have already gone over the ground. By their experience he is wise.



3. To receive—The meaning is, the "design in the proverbs is to enable the one who receives them to become wise and just and discriminating and right." Of wisdom—A different word from that used in verse 2, and here meaning *thoughtfulness*. *Justice*—*Righteousness* would more precisely express the meaning. *Judgment*—Here meaning a course of conduct based upon justice as between man and man. *Equity*—A plural word in the original, not differing widely in meaning from the others in the sentence. These words of similar meaning are used to impress the thought of the writer more strongly. "*Justice* stands for the thing itself—that which is just; *judgment* in respect of right reason, which says it is just; and *equity* in respect of its being agreeable to the law of God."—*Cornelius à Lapide*. It will be observed that all these passages view teaching from the standpoint of the learner, not from that of the teacher, and all point to character, not knowledge, as the highest aim of education. The whole verse *Dr. Hunter* paraphrases as follows: "The design of my instruction is to enable you to acquire an intelligent discipline, a habit of prudence in your personal conduct, of morality in your social and civil relations, and of rectitude in all things."

"TO GIVE TO THE YOUNG MAN KNOWLEDGE AND DISCRETION."

Justice stands for the thing itself—that which is just; *judgment* in respect of right reason, which says it is just; and *equity* in respect of its being agreeable to the law of God."—*Cornelius à Lapide*. It will be observed that all these passages view teaching from the standpoint of the learner, not from that of the teacher, and all point to character, not knowledge, as the highest aim of education. The whole verse *Dr. Hunter* paraphrases as follows: "The design of my instruction is to enable you to acquire an intelligent discipline, a habit of prudence in your personal conduct, of morality in your social and civil relations, and of rectitude in all things."

4. To give subtilty—A shrewdness and sharpness of intellect, enabling its possessor to escape evil. To the simple—The open-hearted and open-minded, exposed to every influence capable of harm, but equally capable of good. To the young man—For whom the book was especially written. Discretion—Rather *discernment*, power to know the good and reject the evil. Youth needs wisdom most at a time when it is apt to be without it. The mastery of this book will give discernment and discretion to anyone. It has been said by one of the wisest of Scotchmen that the practical wisdom which is attributed to his countrymen is largely due to the committing to memory of the proverbs of Solomon by the boys and girls in their homes.

5. A wise man will hear—The one who is wisest will appreciate wisdom most, and be least likely to overrate his own stock of it. Increase learning—Even the wisest can gain.

Authorized Version.

6 To understand a proverb, and ^cthe interpretation; the words of the wise, and their ^ddark sayings.

7 ^eThe fear of the LORD is ^dthe beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Revised Version.

6 To understand a proverb, and ^aa figure; The words of the wise, and their ^bdark sayings.

7 The fear of the LORD is the ^cbeginning of knowledge:
But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.

^c Or, an eloquent speech. — ^e Psalm 78. 2. — ^e Job 28. 28; Psalm 111. 10; chap. 9. 10; Eccles. 12. 13. — ^d Or, the principal part.

^a Or, an interpretation. — ^b Or, riddles. — ^c Or, chief part.

more knowledge and the power which it brings. **Wise counsels**—Literally, “steermanship,” or the power to guide his vessel aright through dangerous seas. Compare Prov. 9. 9 with Matt. 13. 12; Mark 4. 25; Luke 8. 18; 14. 26. A man increases in wisdom in proportion as he has wisdom.

6. To understand a proverb—Another purpose of this book is here named. It is to give practice and skill in the understanding of difficult sayings, penetration of mind in solving mysteries. **And the interpretation**—An unfortunate mistranslation. The word means “an enigma,” or saying which contains a great but concealed truth. Strength of intellect is obtained only by exercise in grappling with difficulties. **The words of the wise**—This expression, which in Ecclesiastes is connected with the masters of assemblies, which may be translated “authors of compilations,” is used in Prov. 22. 17, and implies directly that other proverbs besides those of Solomon are included in this collection. **Their dark sayings**—Their obscure utterances, their riddles. “Many of the passages in this book are enigmas or riddles, intentionally obscure and difficult, for the purpose of exercising thought and ingenuity; or the words are susceptible of more than one meaning, one, perhaps, more obvious, and the other occult, and only to be found by research. This is an educational book, and contains its exercises of skill. The general meaning of this verse is, that he shall attain to excellence in comprehending the force and beauty of the higher forms of discourse and composition, such as are used by poets and sages. This he cannot do without possessing a high cultivation himself, and hence it is another way of saying that he shall rise to an eminent degree of intellectual accomplishment. Here, then, is the object which the regal sage proposes to himself and his pupils in the composition of this work.”—*Hunter*.

II. THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM. VERSES 7-9.

7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge—This sentence contains the essence of the philosophy of the Israelites, and it would seem to have been placed here as a sort of motto, or symbol, or device for the entire book. Similar propositions are found in Prov. 9. 10; Job 28. 28; Psalm 111. 10; Eccles. 12. 13; Prov. 16. 33. The word “fear” stands for due reverence rather than for abject fear. It is filial, not servile. It is that fear which is described in chapter 8. 13 as “to hate evil,” and of which a predominating element is love. *Wardlaw* remarks that the fear of the Lord is in invariable union with love and in invariable proportion to it. We truly fear God just in proportion as we truly love him. No one can advance in knowledge who is not first imbued with this holy fear. This fundamental principle is as true now as it was three thousand years ago. The doctrines that leave a personal God out of the universe are destructive of all sound character. **Fools despise wisdom and instruction**—The whole verse has simpler meaning and more direct force if the order of the words in the original be preserved, “wisdom and instruction fools despise.” The fools in the Hebrew mind were the perverse people, gross and dull of moral understanding, slack and lazy in moral activities, and practically godless. No matter how great is one’s intellect, every one is a “fool” who is indifferent to God.

Illustration 237. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” Compare Prov. 9. 10. Is fear, then, a wise thing? Certainly, when it is reasonable. It is wise for a person who cannot

Authorized Version.

8 ¹My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:
9 For ²they shall be ³an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Revised Version.

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, And forsake not the ⁵law of thy mother:
9 For they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head, And chains about thy neck.

¹Chaps. 4. 1; 6. 20.—²Chap. 3. 22.—³Heb. an adding.

⁵Or, teaching.

swim to fear the water. It is wise for one who is inclined to turn dizzy to fear the edge of the precipice. It is wise for the mountain climber to fear the avalanche. Not to fear would be simply ignorance and folly. Yet the avalanche, the precipice, the mighty ocean itself, are but some of the works of the great Ruler of all. And shall we not fear him? (Jer. 5. 22.) When a young and tender shoot appears above the ground it is often found necessary to support it by tying it lightly to a piece of wood, and this restraint enables it to grow up straight and strong and shapely. Such a wholesome restraint is fear. When it is wanting the young life traveler turns this way and that way at his own caprice, and misses the road.



"AN ORNAMENT OF GRACE UNTO THY HEAD, AND CHAINS ABOUT THY NECK."

8. **My son** is a form of address in common use in the East by teachers toward their pupils. It occurs frequently in the introductory section of the Proverbs (2. 1; 3. 1, 21; 4. 10, 20; 5. 1; 6. 1; 7. 1), and reappears again toward the close in the teacher's address (23. 15, 19, 26; 24. 13, 21; 27. 11). The "fatherhood" of the teacher is referred to in Judg. 17. 10; Isa. 10. 12; 2 Kings 2. 21, and John and Paul assume the same relation to those whom they would instruct (1 John 2. 1; 5. 2; 1 Cor. 4. 15; Philem. 10; Gal. 4. 19). But this exhortation refers to a holy father and mother, and of course inferentially to pious parents. The word **instruction** carries with it the sense of disciplinary education, the word **law** rather the sense of preceptive teaching. With this verse begins the first admonitory discourse of the Book of Proverbs, and it is, in its simplest and superficial meaning, a warning against bloodshed;

but it will be found on deeper study to contain, like the Ten Commandments, certain fundamental truths, and to apply to every age and condition in every stage of civilization.

Illustration 238. Parental care and parental rule are God's ordinance for the protection of the young, and, next to the fear and the love of God himself, there are no bands so strong or so safe. Should such bands be galling? Wear them obediently and lovingly, and "they shall be an ornament of grace to thy head, and chains about thy neck," like the gold crown set upon Mordecai (Esth. 6. 8, 11), and the gold chain put round the neck of Joseph (Gen. 41. 42), and of Daniel (Dan. 5. 29). This adornment was worn even by Jesus, the Son of God, when he sojourned here below (Luke 2. 51). It is sad to see young persons hastening with impatience to divest themselves of it. I met a young lady, the other day, wearing the same crystal necklace which had hung round her neck as a little child. She valued it and saw no reason for laying it aside; and valued "the instruction of her father and the law of her mother" as she had done in infancy. That, too, was far too precious to be put off.

9. **An ornament of grace**—Like jewels upon the brow giving beauty, and the token of sovereignty, is true wisdom. **Chains about thy neck**—The gold necklace is worn in oriental

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
10 My son, if sinners entice thee, ⁹ consent thou not.	10 My son, if sinners entice thee, Consent thou not.
11 If they say, Come with us, let us ¹⁰ lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:	11 If they say, Come with us, Let us lay wait for blood, Let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause;
12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, ¹¹ as those that go down into the pit:	12 Let us swallow them up alive as ⁶ Sheol, ⁷ And whole, as those that go down into the pit;
⁹ Gen. 39. 7, etc.; Psalm 1. 1; Eph. 5. 11.— ¹⁰ Jer. 5. 26.— ¹¹ Psalm 28. 1; 143. 7.	⁶ Or, the grave.— ⁷ Or, Even the perfect.

courts by the favorites of the king. So true wisdom will show its possessor to be one favored of God. There is no beauty and no honor comparable to that given by a noble character.

III. THE ENTICEMENTS OF SIN. VERSES 10-19.

10. My son—With this verse Wisdom begins its warnings against evil companionships, a fruitful source of ruin to character. **If sinners entice thee**—It is a trait of sin to desire to bring others down to its own level; hence the wicked are ever striving to corrupt the good. **Consent thou not**—The only safeguard of youth under temptation is a definite, peremptory resistance, an open refusal. He who parleys with temptation doubles its danger. Compare St. Paul's advice to the Ephesians, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"—advice we should all heed.



"LET US LURK PRIVILY FOR THE INNOCENT."

Illustration 239. No need for me to taste poison if I have seen its effects on some other person.

11. Let us lay wait for blood—The temptation proffered is to join a band of highway robbers, a manner of life for which the mountains and caves of Palestine give abundant opportunities. The popularity of cheap stories of bandits and pirates among young people of our times shows that the warning is still needed, for there is to many minds a strange fascination in the thought of a freebooter's life. **For the innocent without cause**—Those who are innocent *in vain*, whose innocence does not protect them from evil. This verse would seem to show that even in the age of Solomon Palestine was infested by banditti. That it was so in the age of Herod our Lord's parable of the man who fell among thieves is evidence. It is so to-day. The warning of these verses may be more directly needed by many of the boys in our Sunday schools than their parents and teachers recognize. Giddy children are tempted by the bad literature of which we have just spoken; shrewder youths are tempted by more conventional, but equally wicked, opportunities to wrong their fellows—temptations which increase with every year of business experience.

12. No violence was shrunk from by such determined sinners. "The enticement here put before youth is the courage and boldness of their exploits."—*Wardlaw*. "As (Num. 16.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil :	13 We shall find all precious substance, We shall fill our houses with spoil ;
14 Cast in thy lot among us ; let us all have one purse :	14 ⁸ Thou shalt cast thy lot among us ; We will all have one purse :
15 My son, ¹² walk not thou in the way with them ; ¹³ refrain thy foot from their path :	15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them ; Refrain thy foot from their path :
16 ¹⁴ For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.	16 For their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed blood.
17 Surely in vain the net is spread ¹⁵ in the sight of any bird.	17 For in vain ⁹ is the net spread, In the eyes of any bird :
18 And they lay wait for their <i>own</i> blood ; they lurk privily for their <i>own</i> lives.	18 And these lay wait for their own blood, They lurk privily for their own lives.
¹² Psalm 1. 1 ; chap. 4. 14. — ¹³ Psalm 119. 101. — ¹⁴ Isa. 59. 7 ; Rom. 3. 15. — ¹⁵ Heb. in the eyes of everything that hath a wing.	
⁸ Or, Cast in thy lot. — ⁹ Or, the net is spread in the sight, etc.	

30-33) 'the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up' Korah and his company while in the flush of life, so these robbers will suddenly and effectively destroy their victims."—*Deane*.

13. We shall find—The temptation of sudden riches obtained by robbery and without labor. Wicked men forget that God sees them, and will surely punish. The temptation of a short cut to wealth, to the acquirement of that which causes others long years of steady application and carefulness, is one of the most dangerous temptations of modern times. The faithful teacher should emphasize the evils that have wormed their way into modern commercial life. Sometimes a man is guilty of dishonesty as outrageous as that of any Syrian Arab or Western train robber, and yet gathers his extortions with a holy feeling of decency and morality. The plain Gospel truth of this doctrine should be spoken, without anarchistic rant. To fill our houses with spoil is wicked and abominable, whether that spoil be taken amid the terrors of pistol firing, or as bribes of corrupted politics, or with the sleek and pious smile of the gifted business man who is an adept in the art of thievery as well as the art of hypocrisy.

14. Let us all have one purse—This temptation is not, as some have taught, based on the attraction of communism of property. It is an appeal rather to a romantic sentiment prevalent so largely among the young, to the admiration of frank and open-hearted generosity. The lot is spoken of because freebooters in all ages have by lot divided their spoil. Here is a profound remark of the *Pulpit Commentary*: "Community of goods among the wicked carries with it community in crime ; just as the community of goods among the early Christians implied community in religious sentiments and good works."

15. Walk not thou—The only safety for youth is to keep out of the path of temptation, to have no intercourse with evil.

16. Their feet run to evil—God's word presents the highest motives to right conduct. It tells us to avoid sin, not merely because it is harmful to the sinner, or unwise, but because it is wicked. Appeal to the highest motives in character and you will awaken them.

Illustration 240. More needed now than ever, in the age of a literature which takes the robber as its hero, for example, Jesse James, etc. Two boys recently made a cave near New York, called it "Robbers' Den," and set up as highwaymen, but soon found themselves in prison. The detective stories of to-day are tending to make criminals, and the warnings of our lesson are needed by the young.

17. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird—This beautiful proverb is thrown in here as a parenthesis. Imitate the birds, young man, young woman. They see the snare and fly away ; so do you flee from temptation. But if you listen to sinners you will sin with your eyes open.

18. Their own blood . . . their own lives—While they propose to lie in wait to destroy others, they are unconsciously planning to destroy themselves. A murderer studies for

Authorized Version.

19 ¹⁵ So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; *which* taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

Revised Version.

19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain;
It taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

¹⁵ Chap. 15. 27; 1 Tim. 6. 10.

weeks over his plan to kill his victim, entirely oblivious of the fact that with certainty every step toward the murder of that victim is a step toward his own capital punishment. This is the simplest interpretation of the verse, but the truth it contains stands ready for great and profitable amplification.

19. So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain—The paths of all such are ruinous. "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." **Which taketh away the life of the owners thereof**—This does not mean that the robber takes away the life of the original owner of the wealth; that has been said before. Nor does it mean, as some have explained, that the most rapacious robbers take the life of their comrades for the sake of doubling their own gains. It is rather a repetition, in new words, of the truth of the first part of the verse. The lust for gain has such baleful influence over all who have it that it may be truly said to be destructive of their life. In their spiritual, intellectual, and physical natures the seeds of ruin are sown by the love of money.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

There is a vast difference between the writings of David and of Solomon. David's psalms breathe another world, the spiritual. Solomon's proverbs are practical, but they are of the earth earthy. They belong to this world.

We find as a subject in these opening verses of the Book of Proverbs, **The Traits of the Wise Man.**

I. The wise man appreciates the truth. Verse 2. He sees its value; he recognizes it when before him. The ignorant wanderer may pass a ledge of gold-bearing rock without notice, but the experienced miner knows it and values it at a glance.

II. The wise man seeks for the truth. Verse 3. Understanding its value, he is eager to obtain it, and is ready to receive instruction. It requires wisdom to be able to accept wisdom.

III. The wise man gains the truth. Verses 4, 5. He who seeks, finds; and he whose aim in life is to find positive truth will not be thwarted in his search. He will attain to wise counsels.

IV. The wise man obtains power through the truth. Verse 6. He gains insight into mysteries, strength of intellect, powers of penetration; and becomes quick in his intelligence by the search after knowledge.

V. The wise man finds God in the truth. Verse 7. He finds the beginning of wisdom to be a just reverence for God.

VI. The wise man obtains beauty in the truth. Verses 8, 9. True knowledge gives grace and glory. There is a beauty which is born not of the flesh, but of the Spirit.

VII. The wise man finds victory in the truth. Verses 10-16. It gives him power to resist temptation; for he is supported by the fear of the Lord.

TWO GATEWAYS.

OF WISDOM.	OF FOLLY.
THE FEAR	THE LOVE
OF THE LORD	OF SELF

LEADS TO

NOBLE AMBITIONS, GOOD CONSCIENCE, WISE FRIENDS, GOOD CONDUCT, DIVINE GUIDANCE, HOLY JOY, ETERNAL LIFE.	UNHOLY LONGINGS, SECRET SIN, BAD COMPANY, OPEN SIN, ERRORS OF JUDGMENT, SORROW, DEATH.
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"CHOOSE THIS DAY."

LESSON V.—NOVEMBER 1.

BUILDING THE TEMPLE.—1 KINGS 5. 1-12.

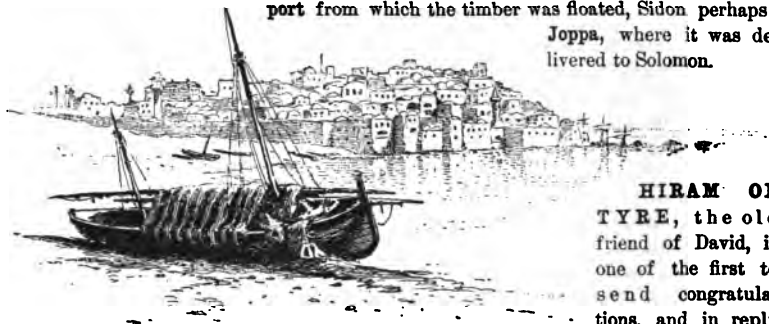
[Read chapters 5 and 6.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.—Psalm 127. 1.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—B. C. 1014.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, Solomon's capital and the site of the temple; Tyre, Hiram's capital; Lebanon, where the cedars grew; the unnamed port from which the timber was floated, Sidon perhaps; Joppa, where it was delivered to Solomon.



JOPPA, FROM THE NORTH.

HIRAM OF TYRE, the old friend of David, is one of the first to send congratulations, and in reply Solomon tells of his determination to build a temple.

Palestine being a country in which the trees did not grow to any size, except a few large terebinths and olives—the latter a brittle wood, and only suited for ornaments—he wishes for cedar, and he begs Hiram will furnish him with the required wood. He will pay for the services of the Tyrian woodcutters; they were as well known to the ancient world as the Western or Canadian lumbermen are known to us. Cedar wood was exported by the Tyrian sailors, and used in Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia. A choice tree and expensive, its great size made it suitable for palaces or temples. Hiram replies that he shall not only have the cedar, but the fir, or cypress, timber he requires. They are to be sent in rafts to any place named by Solomon. We know they were received by him at Joppa, and the thought occurs that many a raft must have been lost, even by the expert Tyrian raftsmen, if the port of Joppa was no better in old days than it is now. Solomon in exchange gave wheat, for Tyre had little land of its own, and pure oil—olive oil, which to Easterns took the place of butter. A huge levy, or *corvée*, is sent from Israel: thirty thousand men—ten thousand a month were in Lebanon, and then they had two months' rest at home. Now, these would be the laborers required to bring down the timber from the hills—the “unskilled labor,” in short; for Sidonian woodcutters were to cut the trees.

THE JERUSALEM QUARRIES.—Stones are now prepared; “great stones,” “costly stones,” cut by Hiram's builders and the Gebalites—these last a Phœnician people from the region between Beyroot and Tripoli, famed through the ancient world for skillful workmen. Where were these stones prepared? Probably in the quarries under Jerusalem, which are now called the “Cotton Grotto,” the entrance to which is near the Damascus Gate. There an opening was found in 1852 which leads to the quarry. The roof, about thirty feet high, is

roughly hewn. You go over ground covered with chips. For about six hundred and fifty feet the excavations are sloping. Stalactites hang from the roof; the floor is strewn with stones, some cut, others in the rough. Chisel-marks are clear on the one, and quarry-marks on the others. In the walls of the quarry some stones still half-cut remain. Bits of pottery, bits of charcoal, have been found, with bones of animals and men. Some of the rocks show where



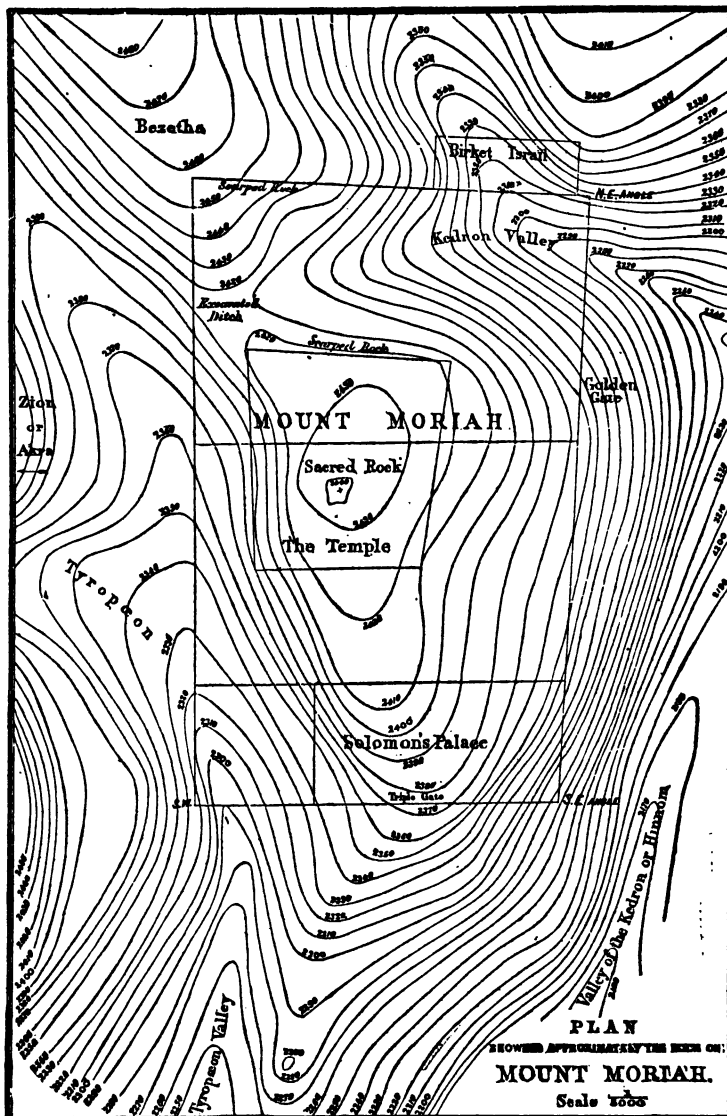
SIDON.

lamps were placed to give light to the workers. Such is the place where probably the stones were prepared. We are then told that while building no sound of "hammer, or ax, nor any tool of iron," was heard in the house. "While building!" This statement, therefore, means that in the quarry the stones were so accurately fitted that they required no alteration on the spot where the wall was to be erected. Shafts had to be driven to the depth of eighty to one hundred and twenty feet; these shafts passed through dangerous rubble, or *débris*, remains of the successive destructions of Jerusalem. Passing through these layers, they came at last to a fat mold, varying in some places from two to three feet, in others (at the southeast angle) from eight to ten feet. No stone chips in this mold, which lay on the living rock, the original foundation; but in this black earth are found bits of broken potsherds, old lamps for burning fat; and, what is still more remarkable, this layer of black earth was cut away at an angle to allow of the stones being lowered to the rock, which had especially been prepared to receive the stone, so that each first or foundation stone was let into the living rock. Had the stones not been prepared in the quarry, as asserted in Scripture, plenty of stone chippings must have been found in this black earth. It is one of the most splendid confirmations of the Bible record.

INTERESTING DISCOVERIES.—Low down at the very base of the excavations, in a niche cut out of the rock, was found a Phœnician jar. Who put it there, and for what? After being there for more than three thousand years, it is now at the office of the Palestine Exploration Fund. But still other facts press upon us. Hiram sent his Phœnician masons, we are told; for, remember, the Jew was never a builder. Though no stone chippings were found in the black mold, fragments of potsherds were, the inscriptions on which are in Phœnician character. One appears to mean "belonging to King Zepha." The jar-handles had an eagle's crest engraved on them; still further characters in red paint were found, copied and photographed by magnesium wire. These characters are also Phœnician, and repeat numerals, special masons' marks, and quarry signs. Marks of this sort have hitherto only been found at Sidon. Now, what do these marks prove? Why, that the biblical account which tells of a master builder, a Phœnician being the architect, is absolutely correct, and

these red marks, which one could look on a few years ago, before the exploration shafts were closed by order of the Turkish government, are really marks made when Solomon laid the foundations of the temple. As to the words "great stones," "costly stones," one stone at the

southeast angle is estimated to weigh one hundred tons; another at the southwest angle is thirty-eight feet nine inches long; other stones are three feet eight inches to four feet in height. Some are "squared" stones; some in foundation walls are rough; other stones are fourteen to eighteen feet in length, three feet ten inches to four feet six inches in height. Near Robinson's arch was found in the excavations a hollow wall, built, it is supposed, to save



stone; others subterranean passages, apparently to bring troops from the citadel to the temple, were found, of what date it is impossible to say; but these early builders were well accustomed to underground passages.—Condensed from *Harper's Bible and Modern Discoveries*.

LESSON HYMN.—

We rear not a temple, like Judah's of old, Whose portals were marble, whose vaultings were gold ;
 No incense is lighted, no victims are slain, No monarch kneels praying to hallow the fane.
 More simple and lowly the walls that we raise, And humbler the pomp of procession and praise,
 Where the heart is the altar whence incense shall roll, And Messiah the King who shall pray for the soul.
 O come in the power of thy life-giving word, And reveal to each heart its Redeemer and Lord ;
 Till faith bring the peace to the penitent given, And love fill the air with the fragrance of heaven.

—Henry Ware, Jr.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (October 26), Building the Temple, 1 Kings 5. 1-12. *Tuesday*, The temple finished, 1 Kings 6. 1-14. *Wednesday*, A beautiful house, 1 Kings 6. 21-30. *Thursday*, Seven years in building, 1 Kings 6. 31-38. *Friday*, Site of the temple, 2 Chron. 3. 1-10. *Saturday*, The pattern of the temple, 1 Chron. 28. 11-21. *Sunday*, A spiritual temple, Eph. 2. 13-22.

Authorized Version.

1 And ¹Hi'ram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Sol'o-mon ; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father : ²for Hi'ram was ever a lover of Da'vid.

2 And ²Sol'o-mon sent to Hi'ram, saying,

Revised Version.

1 And Hi'ram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Sol'o-mon ; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father : for Hi'ram was ever a lover of

2 Da'vid. And Sol'o-mon sent to Hi'ram,

¹ Vers. 10, 18 ; ² Chron. 2. 3, Hiram.—² Sam. 5. 11 ; 1 Chron. 14. 1 ; Amos 1. 9.—² Chron. 2. 3.

¹ See 2 Chron. 2. 3, etc.

I. SOLOMON'S WORK. VERSES 1-6.

1. Concerning Solomon's pomp and power and wisdom we have studied. The greatest manifestation of these in Hebrew eyes, and indeed the great glory of all Hebrew history, was the erection and adornment of the temple ; and as this was due, under God, to the assistance Solomon received both in materials and laborers from the Tyrian king, there is abundant reason to devote one Sunday to the careful study of his alliance with Hiram. **And Hiram**—Hiram (spelled also sometimes Huram) was the son of Abibaal, King of Phœnicia. His friendly relations with the Jews are referred to by Tyrian historians, quotations from whom are preserved by some of the earlier Greek writers. He had reigned twelve years when the building of the temple was begun, and sat on the throne twenty-two years after. He married his daughter to Solomon, according to legendary accounts, and was intellectually so acute as to be a quite worthy antagonist in encounters of riddles and other tests of quickness of which the great Hebrew king was so fond. **King of Tyre**—Tyre means "The-rock." The original city was built on a rocky island, which in later days was known as the fortress of Tyre. Phœnicia, a long strip of seacoast, became the home and starting point of busy merchants and adventurers who were familiar with the whole Mediterranean, and established themselves as ruling forces on all its shores. Sidon was in earlier times the more important town, and the Phœnicians are repeatedly in the Scripture called Sidonians. **Sent his servants unto Solomon**—Sent an embassy to congratulate the young king on his accession to the throne. Friendship between the nations was at this juncture probably more needful to Hiram than to Solomon. The narrow strip of seaboard which formed his kingdom furnished no grain lands, and his country depended upon Israel for its nourishment. **He had heard**—Little phrases like this give us glimpses of that civilization which is so interesting to us now, but of which so few marks remain. When the old king died, and the stately funeral services were over (perhaps, indeed, before all the ceremonies had been gone over) a formal embassy had been doubtless sent to the King of Tyre to notify him of the accession of the young sovereign. **Hiram was ever a lover of David**—Doubtless sincerely so ; doubtless, too, it was to his interest to be, for all who were not David's lovers and who were within reach of his sword were apt to be dethroned.

2. **Solomon sent to Hiram**—*Josephus* says that Solomon's letter and Hiram's reply, a

Authorized Version.

3 Thou knowest how that Da'vid my father could not build a house unto the name of the LORD his God, ⁴for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

4 But now the LORD my God hath given me ⁵rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

5 ⁶And behold, I ^apurpose to build a house unto the name of the LORD my God, ⁷as the LORD spake unto Da'vid my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build a house unto my name.

Revised Version.

3 saying, Thou knowest how that Da'vid my father could not build an house for the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary, nor evil occurrent. And, behold, I purpose to build an house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto Da'vid my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build the house for my

^a 1 Chron. 22. 8; 28. 3.—⁵ Chap. 4. 24; 1 Chron. 22. 9.—⁶ 2 Chron. 2. 4.—^a Heb. *say*.—⁷ 2 Sam. 7. 13; 1 Chron. 17. 12; 22. 10.

condensed report of both of which is found in this lesson, were preserved at length among the public archives of Tyre.

3. Thou knowest how that David my father could not build a house unto the name of the Lord his God, for the wars which were about him—This shows how intimate were the relations of Hiram with David; a sort of confidential intimacy had sprung up between them. We



"UNDER THE SOLES OF HIS FEET."

have already seen how David secured from Hiram cedar trees and carpenters and masons (2 Sam. 5. 11), and that the cedar trees were especially for the house of the Lord (1 Chron. 22. 4). A consideration of the "wars which were about David on every side" greatly enlarges our measurement of the character of that wonderful man. His rise from peasantry was Napoleonic, but his breadth of character and sympathy, which he retained through all the vicissitudes of his life, were far beyond that of any other conqueror known to history. The Lord put them under the soles of his feet—A vigorous oriental figure. We ourselves have a similar idiom, "he trampled them down." This image is found in other parts of the sacred Scriptures (Psalm 7. 5; 60. 12; 8. 6; 91. 13; Isa. 63. 3; Rom. 16. 20; Eph. 1. 22; Heb. 2. 8). At the foot of a wooden mummy case in the British Museum are painted the soles of two shoes, and on each is the figure of an Arab with his arms and hands tied behind him and his feet tied at the ankles. In this helpless state he is supposed to be trampled on by the walker. The Egyptians hated the Arab marauders as natural enemies, and the artist has used precisely the same figure in his painting as is used in the text here.

4. Now the Lord my God hath given me rest—As promised in 1 Chron. 22. 9. We are not to think that David had no rest from wars (see 2 Sam. 7. 1), but he had to conquer it. Solomon's rest and peace were inherited. On every side—Just as David was surrounded by wars, Solomon is surrounded by peace. There is neither adversary—So that Haddad and Rezon, of whom we read in 1 Kings 11. 14, 23, must have come later than this. Nor evil occurrent—Better "occurrence," that is, "rebellion, famine, pestilence, or other sufferings."—Bähr. This freedom from calamity contrasts as sharply with David's career as does freedom from war.

5. This verse shows a graceful endeavor made by the young prince to give to his honored father the credit due him for planning and providing for the temple; a reverent assurance, also, that the plans of both kings had received divine sanction. See 1 Chron. 29. 6-9; 2 Chron. 2. 3-7.

Authorized Version.

6 Now therefore command thou that they hew me ⁸cedar trees out of Leb'a-non; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt ⁹appoint: for thou knowest that *there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Si-do'ni-ans.*

7 And it came to pass, when Hi'ram heard the words of Sol'o-mon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, ⁹Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto Da'vid a wise son over this great people.

Revised Version.

6 name. Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Leb'a-non; and my servants shall be with thy servants; and I will give thee hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt say: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Zi-do'ni-ans. And it came to pass, when Hi'ram heard the words of Sol'o-mon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto Da'vid a wise son over this

⁸ 2 Chron. 2. 8, 10. — ⁹ Heb. say. — ⁹ Chap. 10. 9; 2 Chron. 2. 11, 12; 9. 7, 8.

6. Now therefore command thou—The account in 2 Chron. 2. 3-10 gives us a beautiful expansion of this request. He asks for one of the "cunning Sidonian workmen" of whom *Homer* had so much to say—one who could design and superintend casting, carving, engraving, and embroidery, for he was to work in gold and other metals, in various costly woods, and in "the grain of Sarra worn by kings and heroes old" (*Milton*)—that costly "purple" which it was the delight of classical writers to describe. Cedar trees out of Lebanon—Lebanon has exactly the same name in Hebrew that Mont Blanc has in French—"The White Mountain." It is a white limestone range with summits of snow. "At the head of Wady Kadisha there is a vast recess in the central ridge of Lebanon, eight miles in diameter. Above it rise the loftiest summits in Syria. In the very center of this recess, on a little irregular knoll (over six thousand feet above the level of the sea), stands the clump of cedars known to modern travelers—the modern survivors of a growth which probably covered the flanks of the range in Solomon's day."—*Porter*. The cedar forests were in Hiram's dominions, although the original dowry of Israel included Lebanon (Josh. 13. 5). The "cedar" of Scripture probably included several varieties of wood which now bear other names. That we have here a mere abstract of Solomon's request may be seen from Hiram's answer (verse 8), where "timber of fir" is also mentioned. My servants shall be with thy servants—"Sharing and lightening their work."—*Hammond*. Unto thee will I give hire—For the keeping of this promise see verse 11. There is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians—We have already seen that "the mechanical skill of the Phœnicians generally, and of the Sidonians in particular, is noticed by many ancient writers."—*Rawlinson*. It is interesting also to note that Phœnicians are frequently referred to in the classics as Sidonians; and that their cleverness in building houses of wood is especially mentioned.

II. HIRAM'S WORK. VERSES 7-12.

7. When Hiram heard the words of Solomon—As reported by his ambassadors. He rejoiced greatly—For more reasons than one. The friendship of Israel for Phœnicia was of relatively greater importance than the friendship of two modern powers like Russia and France, or England and the United States. The alliance which Hiram had had with David was now continued and cemented with greater strength. Blessed be the Lord—Or, as it ought to be translated, "Blessed be Jehovah;" an acknowledgment of the divinity of the national God of Israel, but not at all an indication that Hiram was a proselyte to the Hebrew faith. In 2 Chron. 1. 12 the acknowledgment is expanded, and Jehovah is said to be maker of heaven and earth, which may, as *Dr. Rawlinson* fancies, have been an identification of Jehovah with his own supreme divinity, Melkarth; but that is not likely. "A belief in Jehovah as a ruling God was quite compatible with the retention of a firm faith in Baal and Astarte."—*Hammond*. Hath given unto David a wise son over this great people—This is the earliest public acknowledgment of Solomon's wisdom of which we have record. *Dr. Hammond's* belief that "the proof of

Authorized Version.

8 And Hi'ram sent to Sol'o-mon, saying, I have ^cconsidered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

9 My servants shall bring *them* down from Leb'a-non unto the sea; ¹⁰ and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt ^dappoint me, and will cause them to be

^c Heb. *heard*.—¹⁰ 2 Chron. 2. 16.—^d Heb. *send*.

Revised Version.

8 great people. And Hi'ram sent to Sol'o-mon, saying, I have heard *the message* which thou hast sent unto me: I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and 9 concerning timber of ³ fir. My servants shall bring them down from Leb'a-non unto the sea: and I will make them into rafts to go by sea unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to

³ Or, *cypress*.

wisdom lay in Solomon's fulfilling his wise father's purposes, and in his care for the worship of God," we believe to be more poetic than accurate. Hiram had his own interest to take care of,

and he felt it to be cause for gratitude that a statesman had inherited Israel's throne. A less sagacious man might have attempted to push further David's career of conquest, and have even sought to dethrone Hiram, but this "wise son" made friends of the people all about.

8. Hiram sent to Solomon—In writing (2 Chron. 2. 11). According to the universal belief of antiquity, the use of letters

began with the Phoenicians. I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for—This begins very like a modern letter; for example: "Yours of the 1st received and duly considered." Thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir (cypress)—Modern Arabs have but one name for the three trees, pine, cedar, and juniper. The wood of the cedars that now grow on Lebanon is neither very beautiful nor eminently fitted for building. The timber used in the palace of Nineveh, which was long believed to be cedar, is now believed to be yew.



TOMB OF HIRAM.

9. My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea—That is, bring down the logs of cedar. The modern cedar grove is ten hours distant from Tripoli. The descent is steep, and the road must always have been a bad one. Porter says, "It seems to have been intended for mountain goats only. It winds down sublime glens, and zigzags down rocky declivities, and jumps over stone-strewn terraces." Hammond says, "It appeared to me to be the most rocky and dangerous road in all Palestine." It is possible that the timber was collected and floated at Gebal (Biblus), the modern *Jebel*. The ruins of the town are ancient and extensive, and we know that the road ran anciently from Gebal to Baalbec, so that this transport was not impracticable. Lebanon is twenty-seven hours distant by way of Tripoli. But Sidon itself would be as convenient a place as any to which to bring the timber down, and probably from Sidon it was shipped. Years before this, when Hiram ascended his throne, he did much for the adornment of Tyre, and doubtless he had already transported much timber from Lebanon. I will convey them by sea in floats—The Revised Version is better, "I will make them into rafts to go by sea." So timber was transported in the most ancient Orient just as it is in modern times down the forest streams of America. The place that thou shalt appoint—The Chronicler gives its name, Joppa (2 Chron. 2. 16). Joppa is only forty miles distant from the

Authorized Version.

discharged there, and thou shalt receive *them*: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, ¹¹ in giving food for my household.

10 So Hi'ram gave Sol'o-mon cedar trees and fir trees *according to* all his desire.

¹¹ See Ezra 3. 7; Ezek. 27. 17; Acts 12. 20.

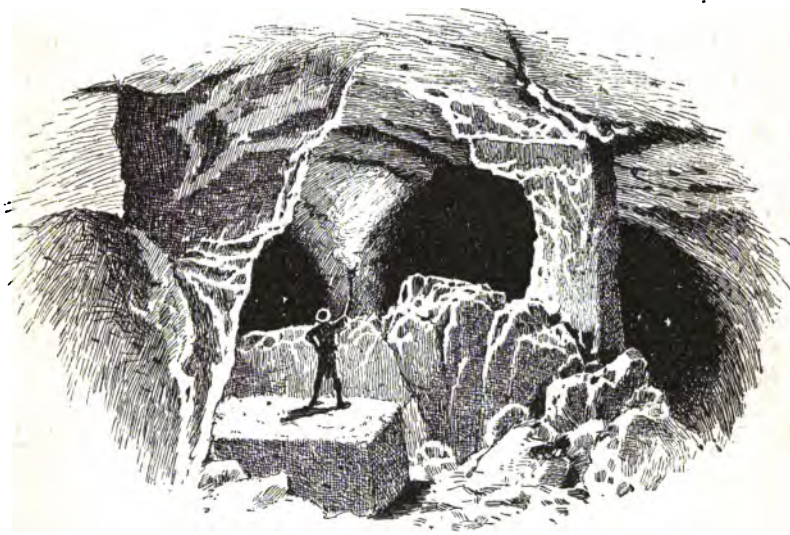
Revised Version.

be broken up there, and thou shalt ⁸ receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire,

10 in giving food for my household. So ⁴ Hi'ram gave Sol'o-mon timber of cedar and

⁸ Or, *carry them away*.—⁴ Heb. *Hirom*, and in ver. 18.

holy city, but the transport of the timber over the rocky road between it and Jerusalem must have been almost as difficult as its transport from Lebanon to the sea. **Discharged there, and thou shalt receive them**—That is, my representatives shall give an inventory, and you shall give a receipt. **Thou shalt accomplish my desire**—The phrase is the same as that translated in the eighth verse, "I will do all thy desire." Hiram's answer in brief is, "I will do what you



QUARRIES UNDER JERUSALEM, FROM WHICH THE STONE FOR SOLOMON'S TEMPLE WAS OBTAINED.

ask if you do what I ask." **In giving food for my household**—And now Hiram tells in what shape he would prefer to receive the "hire" promised by Solomon. "The food for the royal household must be carefully distinguished from the food given to the workmen (2 Chron. 2. 10). The fact that twenty thousand *cors* of wheat formed a part of each has led to their being confounded; for example, in the marginal references. It is noticeable that when the second temple was built cedar wood was again brought to Jerusalem *via* Joppa, in return for 'meat and drink and oil unto them of Zidon' (Ezra 3. 7). The selection of food as the hire of his servants by Hiram almost amounts to an undesigned coincidence. Their narrow strip of corn land between the roots of Lebanon and the coast—Phœnicia proper ('the great plain of the city of Sidon,' *Josephus*, "Ant.," v, 8. 1) is only twenty-eight miles long, with an average breadth of one mile—compelled the importation of corn and oil. Ezekiel (27. 17) mentions wheat, honey, oil, and balm as exported from Palestine to the markets of Tyre. It has been justly remarked that the fact that Phœnicia was thus dependent upon Palestine for its breadstuffs explains the unbroken peace that prevailed between the two countries."—*Hammond*.

10. The words descriptive of the trees are exactly the same as in verse 8.

Authorized Version.

11 ¹² And Sol'o-mon gave Hi'ram twenty thousand 'measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Sol'o-mon to Hi'ram year by year.

12 And the Lord gave Sol'o-mon wisdom, ¹³ as he promised him: and there was peace between Hi'ram and Sol'o-mon; and they two made a league together.

Revised Version.

11 timber of fir according to all his desire. And Sol'o-mon gave Hi'ram twenty thousand 'measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of 'pure oil: thus gave Sol'o-mon to Hi'ram year by year. And the Lord gave Sol'o-mon wisdom, as he promised him; and there was peace between Hi'ram and Sol'o-mon; and they two made a league together.

¹² See 2 Chron. 2. 10.—¹³ Heb. cor.—¹² Chap. 3. 12.

* Heb. cor.—¹³ Or, beaten.

11. Pure oil—Beaten oil, such as was obtained by pounding the olives when not quite ripe in a mortar. A coarser oil was obtained by the use of the oil press. **Thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year**—And this great annual payment, together with the draft of so many laborers, will in part explain the strain and unrest felt by the people of Israel, which found utterance when Rehoboam succeeded Solomon on the throne. How long this was paid to Hiram we do not know. It may have been until the temple was finished; it may have been during the whole of Hiram's life.

12. The Lord gave Solomon wisdom—Hiram gave Solomon cedar and fir trees; and Solomon gave Hiram wheat and pure oil; and Jehovah gave Solomon wisdom. **They two made a league together**—And the Phœnicians and Israelites from that time forth were friendly. Jezebel, Ahab's wife, was a daughter of the Tyrian king Ethbaal.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The great event of Solomon's reign was the building of the temple on Mount Moriah. The material house of God represented to that age Jehovah dwelling among his people and receiving their homage. It was a shadow of things to come; an image of the true house of God, which is the spiritual Church of Christ.

We find here **The Spirit of the Temple Builders.**

I. The Spirit of Peace. Verses 1-4. War is often necessary, and may prepare the way before the kingdom of God. But God's Church is not built in the spirit of war. It grows best in peace, when man is in friendship with his brother man. There was a time for David, the warrior and conqueror, and there was also a time for Solomon, the man of peace.

II. The Spirit of Purpose. Verse 5. "I purpose," said Solomon. There must be a will if there is to be a work. Every great movement in the history of God's cause has had back of it a man of purpose. If a church is built, or a debt on it paid, or a harvest of souls gathered, there is always the purpose underlying it. Solomon never showed higher wisdom than when he resolved to build the house of God.

III. The Spirit of Cooperation. Verses 6-9. Solomon and Hiram, Israelite and Tyrian,

Jew and Gentile, the man of brains and the men of toil, must work together in the building of God's house. In the temple, built of timber hewn by Sidonian woodcutters and wrought by Phœnician architects, there is a foregleam of a Church where Jew and Gentile may yet meet as one.

IV. The Spirit of Sacrifice. What-ever is precious is expensive. God's house cannot be builded unless liberal offerings are made. Hiram gave trees, the workers

WHO BUILT SOLOMON'S TEMPLE?

WORKING FOR GOD.

1. IN PERSON.

LEAVE NOTHING FOR OTHERS YOU CAN DO YOURSELF.

2. BY PROXY.

1. CAREFULLY SELECT THE WORKERS.
2. CONTRIBUTE MONEY.
3. CONTRIBUTE PRAYERS.
4. CONTRIBUTE ENCOURAGING WORDS.

"EVERY MAN SHALL BEAR HIS OWN BURDEN."

"BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS."

gave toil. Solomon and all Israel gave treasure. The money is well expended that is employed in the building of a house for God. A man who had once possessed riches, but afterward lost nearly all his property, looked at a church and said, "I am glad that the ten thousand dollars which I gave to the building of that church is saved."

V. **The Spirit of Wisdom.** Verse 12. Some of Solomon's wisdom proved to be folly, but his building of the temple was true statesmanship. It perpetuated the worship, it held the people together, it strengthened the true religion, it gave a daily object lesson in God's method of salvation. The highest wisdom is that which employs all means and resources for the promotion of the cause of God.



LESSON VI.—NOVEMBER 8.

THE TEMPLE DEDICATED.—1 KINGS 8. 54-63.

[Read 1 Kings 8. 1-66.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.—Hab. 2. 20.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Autumn of B. C. 1004.

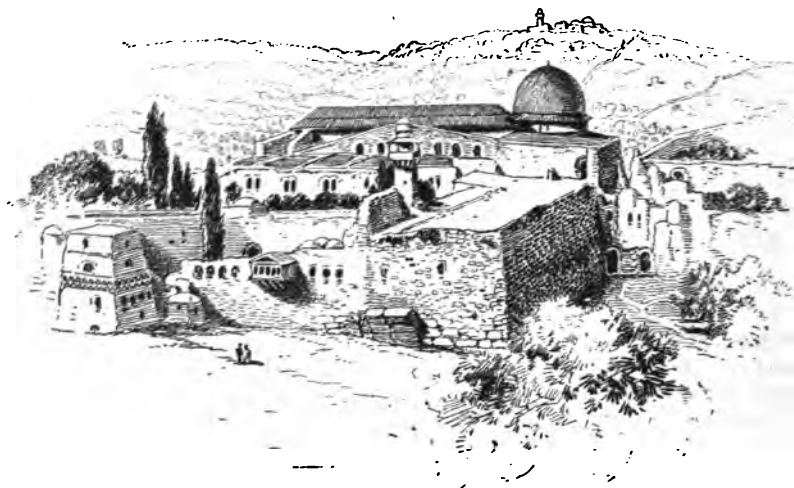
PLACE.—Mount Moriah in Jerusalem.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE TEMPLE "took place apparently in the autumn of the twelfth year of Solomon's reign. The building is described with the utmost minuteness, but we cannot get with certainty a conception of the whole. With all its magnificence, in many respects it was an earthlier ideal than the humble tent whose age-worn relics were now laid up in the store chambers of its successor. Not the temple, but the tabernacle, was the emblem used in the Epistle to the Hebrews to set forth the high-priestly work of Christ. Its migrations taught Jehovah's constant presence with his people; its humble splendor did not risk being thought worthy of God, who deigned to accept the offering of love; and, further, its pattern was the detailed realization of a divine vision, and not the result of human art. But the retrograde step was necessitated by the people's weakness, and as such it was approved by God. The overwhelming attraction of one central sanctuary was needed to counterbalance perpetual temptations to idolatry from the worship in the 'high places;' and the people's pride and affection toward the house of God was to be fostered through centuries of prosperity and affliction, preparing them ultimately for a temple 'not made with hands,' wide as creation itself. Solomon's dedicatory prayer realizes wonderfully the meaning and purposes of such a shrine, and thoroughly befits the king's ideal 'wisdom.' The variations of the text between Kings and Chronicles, and between Hebrews and the Septuagint, show us that the prayer was transmitted by oral tradition, taking slightly different shapes when finally reduced to literary form." —*Moulton*.

THE DEDICATION PRAYER, "which belongs to the finest pieces of the Old Testament, received a high significance through the fact that the person who offered it did so in the highest official character and rank, as king and head of the theocracy, and in view of the whole people, on an occasion which formed an epoch in the theocracy. This, then, is not the prayer of a private person, upon a private matter, but one offered in the name of the whole nation, and upon a subject which formed the central point of its worship, and therefore touched its highest interests. It did not spring from individual religious views, but from the religious consciousness of the whole community, and may therefore be regarded as a public and solemn confession of faith, inasmuch as it brings to light the chief and fundamental truths

of the Old Testament religion which peculiarly distinguished it from all others. There is not a prayer to be compared to this in all pre-Christian antiquity. Had we nothing belonging to Jewish antiquity but this prayer, it would alone suffice to attest the depth, the purity, and the truth of the Israelitish knowledge of God and of salvation, over against the religious ideas of all other peoples."—*Bähr*. See note on verse 54.

SOLOMON'S PRAYER AND DEUTERONOMY.—"If the prayer of Solomon be, as it has all the appearance of being, a genuine document of the time, preserved in the archives to



A PORTION OF THE SITE OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.
(Seen from Mount Zion; Mount Olivet is in the background.)

which the authors of both Kings and Chronicles had access, all theories of the late origin of Deuteronomy must be regarded as baseless. The language of the prayer is mainly modeled upon Deuteronomy, the promises and threats contained in which are continually before the mind of the writer. Notice especially verses 23, 27, 33, 34, 35, 37, 47, 48, 51, 53."—*Speaker's Commentary*.

SILENCE BEFORE GOD.—Our GOLDEN TEXT for to-day speaks of keeping silence. There are many kinds of silence. There is the silence of awe—as when the storm rages, the thunder roars, and the lightning flashes; then merry voices cease and laughter is hushed. There is the silence of attention—as when a person comes in who has some news to bring for which all are eagerly looking, or some thrilling tale to narrate which all are anxious to hear. There is the silence of abasement—when some fault has been committed and there is no longer any possibility of hiding it, no excuse that can be advanced, no word to urge in extenuation. There is the silence of submission—when opposition to the will of another is at length given up, adverse arguments dropped, and entire surrender made. With one or more of the silences every Sunday scholar must be familiar. All these are among the reasons for the silence of our souls when the Lord is in his holy temple.

A SIMPLE SCHEME FOR THE STUDY OF THIS LESSON.—FIRST. Get into your mind clearly the "environments" of this dedicatory service. 1. *The date*. What was going on at that time in southern Europe? In northern Africa? Who were the Jews' nearest neighbors? 2. *The city*. Its size? Probable architectural characteristics? History up to date? Population? 3. *The temple*. Give conjectural estimate of its cost, not in modern coinage so

much as by modern valuations. It will be of great benefit to master the description given in the earlier chapters of 1 Kings, and with the help of a good commentary turn it into modern English. The Bible account is technical, a sort of official list of specifications. From it the temple should be reproduced in our imaginations, and described vividly as a newspaper reporter might now describe a new State capitol. 4. *The actors.* Solomon: His mother? His age on this dedication day? Amid what influences was he educated? The peculiarities of his "wisdom?" Along what lines were his scholarly investigations pursued? Impression made by him on the oriental mind, apart from sacred history? Describe his subjects—the sort of audience that received this blessing. Who usually did the official praying for the Jewish people? Why did not the high priest perform this dedicatory service? Read repeatedly the entire prayer; the time will be well spent. (It is recorded in verses 23-53 of this chapter.) SECOND. Having thus fixed in mind the environments of this dedication, analyze Solomon's benediction. 1. *Thanks*, for the "rest," the wealth, and peace resulting from David's conquests, and for the fulfillment of all God's promises. 2. *Prayer*, for God's constant presence, for obedient hearts, and for such providential protection as would prove to the world that there was only one God. 3. *Exhortation*, to perfect loyalty of heart.

IN THE STUDY OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE we may note: "1. The temple is a symbol of the Church of God, illustrating how and on what terms God will dwell with man, and how man may dwell with God. 2. Its formal dedication formed a religious epoch in the history of the chosen nation. 3. In connection with the ceremonies Solomon appeared in the true character of theocratic king. 4. The noblest thing a king can do for his people is by example and precept to encourage them to a godly life. 5. Houses erected for the establishing and perpetuating of religious worship are a great national bond. 6. Great occasions should, when possible, be utilized for inculcating lessons of truth and righteousness."

LESSON HYMN.—

I love thy Church, O God! Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye, And graven on thy hand.
For her my tears shall fall, For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given, Till toils and cares shall end.
Beyond my highest joy I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows, Her hymns of love and praise.—*Timothy Dwight.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (November 2), The Temple Dedicated, 1 Kings 8. 54-63. *Tuesday*, Assembly of the people, 2 Chron. 5. 1-10. *Wednesday*, The word fulfilled, 2 Chron. 6. 1-11. *Thursday*, Prayer of dedication, 2 Chron. 6. 12-21. *Friday*, A refuge in trouble, 2 Chron. 6. 22-31. *Saturday*, The cry of penitence, 2 Chron. 6. 32-42. *Sunday*, The glory of the Lord, 2 Chron. 7. 1-11.

Authorized Version.

54 And it was so, that when Sol'o-mon had made an end of praying all this prayer and

Revised Version.

54 ¹ And it was so, that when Sol'o-mon had made an end of praying all this prayer and

¹ See 2 Chron. 7. 1, etc.

I. THANKSGIVING. VERSES 54-56.

54. When Solomon had made an end—*Josephus* tells us that at the close of the prayer the king cast himself upon the ground and continued in silent worship a long time before he arose to offer sacrifices. **Praying all this prayer**—Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple is often read at the dedication of churches. "Its three parts consist of, 1. Adoration for the fulfillment of the promise of David (verses 23, 24). 2. Prayer for its continued fulfillment, and for blessings on the concentration of worship at that place (verses 25-30). 3. Supplication for specific blessings, as when smitten before enemies, in times of drought, famine, 885

Authorised Version.

supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from ¹ kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.

55 And he stood, ² and blessed all the congregation of Is'ra-el with a loud voice, saying,

56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Is'ra-el, according to all that he

Revised Version.

supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread forth toward heaven. And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Is'ra-el with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Is'.

¹ Psalm 95. 6; Luke 22. 41; Acts 20. 36; 21. 5.—² Sam. 6. 18.

or plague, for the devout stranger, for success in battle, and deliverance from captivity (verses 81-83).”—*Terry*. **Before the altar**—According to 2 Chron. 6. 18, Solomon during his address and prayer occupied a brazen scaffold perhaps five feet high in the midst of the court of the temple. All the rites described took place in the open air. **Kneeling on his knees**—“This is the first mention of this posture in the sacred history.”—*Stanley*. The Jews



SITE OF THE TEMPLE (DOME OF THE ROCK).

(In the foreground is the wall of the Outer Court, of ancient Hebrew masonry, at the base of which every Friday the Jews pour forth their walling, it being the nearest point to the site of the temple which they are allowed to approach.)

usually stood in prayer. But the attitude was not unusual, and betokened humiliation and intensity of feeling. Possibly, however, the statement in 2 Chron. 6. 13, being parenthetical, refers to a previous prostration when the Shekinah descended. In that case he stood up for prayer, and here prostrates himself again. **With his hands spread up to heaven**—Compare Exod. 9. 33; Ezra 9. 5; Psalm 28. 2; Isa. 1. 15. The scene must have been one of the most impressive of all human history.

55. **He stood, and blessed**—This benediction, uttered **with a loud voice**, was to some extent a recapitulation of the prayer he had just offered. “The words of blessing prove that he did not assume priestly functions and himself put any blessing upon the people (Num. 6. 27).”—*Hammond*.

56. **The Lord, that hath given rest**—Compare Psalm 95. 11 and Heb. 3. and 4. “It is difficult not to conclude that this verse contains distinct reference to Deut. 12. 9, 10, where we read that when the Lord should have given rest to Israel then a place for sacrifice and worship should be appointed. That place is now dedicated, and the king sees in this circumstance a proof that the rest is now at last fully attained. The permanent sanctuary is a pledge of settlement in the land.”—*Hammond*. Even now when David's wars had established his son, “The Peaceful,” on the throne of unquestioned empire, the people were to find that Jehovah's promise was not exhausted—“There remaineth yet a rest [or Sabbath keeping] for the people of God.” **All that he promised**—Throughout the history of the fathers (Exod. 33.

Authorized Version.

promised: ³there hath not ^afailed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Mo'ses his servant.

57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: ⁴let him not leave us, nor forsake us:

58 That he may ⁵incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

59 And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Is'ra-el ^bat all times, as the matter shall require:

60 ⁶That all the people of the earth may know that ⁷the LORD is God, and that there is none else.

Revised Version.

ra-el, according to all that he promised: there hath not ²failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Mo'ses his servant. The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers:

57 let him not leave us, nor forsake us: that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments,

58 which he commanded our fathers. And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Is'ra-el, ³as every day shall require: that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD, he is God;

^a Deut. 19. 10; Josh. 21. 45; 23. 14. — ^a Heb. *fallen*. — ^b Deut. 31. 6; Josh. 1. 5. — ^c Psalm 119. 26. — ^d Heb. *the thing of a day in its day*. — ^e Josh. 4. 24; 1 Sam. 17. 46; 2 Kings 19. 19. — ^f Deut. 4. 35. 39.

² Heb. *fallen*. — ³ Heb. *the thing of a day in its day*.

14; Deut. 3. 20; 12. 10; 25. 19; Josh. 21. 44). There hath not failed one word—Such marked fulfillment of all his good promise is a mighty strengthener of faith in God. "Manifestly, only in a time of profound tranquility could such great works as the temple and the king's palace have been carried out."—*Lumby*.

II. PRAYER. VERSES 57-61.

57. "Solomon here insensibly glides again into prayer."—*Hammond*. "The exact words here used by Solomon are those of Psalm 27. 9, entitled, probably with reason, 'A Psalm of David.'"—*Speaker's Commentary*. Compare Deut. 31. 6; Josh. 1. 5.

58. "The condition on which God's blessing was insured was at this time printed on Solomon's mind."—*Hammond*. That he may—The king asks not for Jehovah's presence to give temporal blessings, but to guard his people from sin. Incline our hearts—The "Speaker's Commentary" notes that this doctrine that God "inclines men's hearts" first appears in Scripture in the Davidic psalms. Solomon in this prayer seems to be thoroughly penetrated with his father's spirit. To walk . . . to keep—Devout inclination leads in the ways God has made for his people, and such a "walk with God" requires strict observance of his commandments—Such an upright life will also be strengthened by attention not only to the letter and spirit of published commands, but also to statutes and judgments, in which one may discover God's love of righteousness and hatred of evil.

59. Let these my words . . . be nigh—The prayers are almost personified, as messengers who are to come before Jehovah and remain to plead at all times. As the matter shall require—The Revised Version is better. The Hebrew is literally, "The word of a day in its day." According to the wants of each day and each exigency these living voices in the presence of Jehovah were to be heard—a special word of supplication adapted to each special day. It is the lesson of daily grace for daily needs, so familiar to us from our Lord's words (Matt. 6. 11, 34) and his final promise, "I am with you all the days."

60. Compare verse 43; Psalm 67. 1, 2, etc. "We have here a recurrence to the thought of verses 41-43, which was evidently prominent in Solomon's mind. He hopes the house now dedicated will be fraught with blessing for the world, and that the Gentiles will come to its light. Compare Isa. 2. 2, 3."—*Rawlinson*. That the Lord is God, and that there is none else—Many heathen, including Hiram, believed that Jehovah was God, and would have been

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
61 Let your ⁸ heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.	61 there is none else. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his com-
62 And ⁹ the king, and all Is'ra-el with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD.	62 mandments, as at this day. And the king, and all Is'ra-el with him, offered sacrifice
63 And Sol'o-mon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Is'ra-el ¹⁰ dedicated the house of the LORD.	63 before the LORD. And Sol'o-mon offered for the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Is'ra-el dedicated the house of the LORD.
<small>⁸ Chap. 11. 4; 15. 3, 14; 2 Kings 30. 3.—⁹ 2 Chron. 7. 4, etc. ¹⁰ Num. 7. 10, 84; 2 Chron. 2. 4; 7. 5; John 10. 27.</small>	

willing to admit him to their pantheon; but they were not willing to give up their own false deities. Not even yet has Solomon's comprehensive prayer been fully answered.

61. An instructive commentary on the first words of this verse is to be found in 1 Kings 11. 4, where it is said of this same Solomon, "His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God." "Having preached to others, he himself became a castaway." The Hebrew word for perfect here is akin to *peace*, and suggests the idea of "complete peace and fellowship" with Jehovah. *Lumby* compares the Mohammedan word for religion, "Islam," and the religious man, "Moslem." **Walk . . . keep**—See above on verse 58. **As at this day**—Many hearts are full of zeal and piety on great religious occasions, but after the excitement is over they fail to walk in the statutes and commandments of God.

"THE BEST AND GREATEST WISH which a king can form for his people, a father for his children, a pastor for his flock, is: May your heart be righteous, that is, whole and undivided, before the Lord our God. He who elects to side with him must do so wholly and entirely; all 'halting between two opinions' is an abomination to him; the lukewarm he will 'spew out of his mouth.' Be thou on the Lord's side, and he will be with thee."—*Lange*.

III. SACRIFICE. VERSES 62, 63.

62, 63. Here the Chronicler resumes his parallel narrative, our text from verse 54 being absent from his account. Instead of it he has (2 Chron. 7. 1-8) a statement to which we have already referred, recording the descent of the sacred fire. **The king, and all Israel**—The king had doubtless taken ample time to provide for a representative assembly of all Israel, and they came "from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt" (verse 65). "Great multitudes can assemble in Eastern climates, where the shelter of a roof at night is not a necessity, with less preparation, except for actual food, than is required in Western lands."—*Lumby*. **Offered sacrifice**—And we must remember that among the Hebrews, as among all ancient nations, sacrifices were feasts, sometimes on a very large scale. **Peace offerings**—The law for these, given in Lev. 7. 11-21, provides that the greater part of such offering shall be eaten the day that it is offered—eaten, that is, as a feast of thanksgiving, a sort of eucharistic meal. So that these enormous sacrifices were actually required as a feast for the vast crowd assembled, bivouacking in oriental fashion round the city. The occasion was so sacred, whether they ate or whether they drank, they did all to the glory of God. Probably several hundred thousand assembled, and probably most of them remained during the fourteen days mentioned in verse 65. This goes far to explain the enormous number of animals given in this verse. "All the Hebrews feasted with their wives and children; moreover also the king celebrated the feast which is called the Feast of Tabernacles grandly and magnificently before the temple, feasting together with all the people."—*Josephus*. **Two and twenty thousand oxen, . . . a hundred and twenty thousand sheep**—*Josephus* gives the same number of sheep, but only twelve thousand oxen.

"But it is foolish to doubt the accuracy of the text. The various parts of the narrative are in perfect harmony. 'All Israel' (verse 65) having come to Jerusalem would imply the presence of at least one hundred and twenty thousand men above the ordinary population. They *all* offered sacrifice 'with the king' (verse 62), which would make the number of victims necessarily enormous. The only temple altar was found insufficient for the victims, and provision was made for offering sacrifices on altars set up for the occasion. If anyone suppose that the number assembled could not have eaten the flesh of so many victims, we must remember that we do not know what the number assembled was. The number of full grown males at the last census had been one million three hundred thousand (2 Sam. 24. 9), or one million five hundred and seventy thousand (1 Chron. 21. 5). How many of these had come up to Jerusalem, or what proportion of them was accompanied by their families, we cannot say. Then besides, it was provided in the law that anything remaining of the peace offering to the third day should be privately burnt, and very much of the meat may have been disposed of in this way, the object of the sacrifice being the glory of God and not the convenience of the people. Profusion was a usual feature of the sacrifices of antiquity. Three hundred oxen formed a common sacrifice at Athens; five hundred kids were offered each year at the Marathonian. Sacrifices of a thousand oxen were not infrequent. According to an Arabian historian the Caliph Moktader sacrificed during his pilgrimage to Mecca forty thousand camels and cows and fifty thousand sheep. *Tavernier* speaks of one hundred thousand victims as offered by the king of Tonquin."—*Rawlinson*.

It is a pity that the last three verses of the fourth chapter are not included in our lesson. They tell of the erection of temporary altars to accommodate the profusion of offerings; of the great feast continuing fourteen days; of the dismissal; of the rejoicing throngs by the people; and how they thanked the king as they returned to their homes "joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done."

Dean Milman's description of the scene recorded in this chapter ("History of the Jews," vol. i, pp. 315-318) is at once most truthful and most graphic, especially its termination. "As the king concluded," he says, "the cloud which had rested over the holy of holies grew brighter and more dazzling; fire broke out and consumed all the sacrifices (see 2 Chron. 7. 1); the priests stood without, awestruck by the insupportable splendor; the whole people fell on their faces, and worshiped and praised the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy is forever. Which was the greater, the external magnificence or the moral sublimity of the scene? Was it the temple, situated on its commanding eminence, with all its courts, the dazzling splendor of its materials, the innumerable multitudes, the priests in their gorgeous attire, the king with all the insignia of royalty on his throne of burnished brass, the music, the radiant cloud filling the temple, the sudden fire flashing upon the altar, the whole nation upon their knees? Was it not rather the religious grandeur of the hymns and of the prayer; the exalted and rational views of the divine nature; the union of a whole people in the adoration of the one great incomprehensible, almighty, everlasting Creator?"

The CHIEF TEACHING in all this lesson is of God's fidelity to his promises:

Men sin:	God remains pure.
Men forget:	God forgets nothing.
Men fail:	God fulfills every promise.
Men promise:	God receives and blesses.
Men break promises	God is long-suffering and patient.

The SECONDARY TEACHING is of man's duty:

Man ought to know that the Lord is God.	He ought to walk as God orders.
He ought to know that there is none else.	He ought to keep God's laws.
He ought to keep his heart pure.	How far short of it we all come!

Let us pray Psalm 90. 12.

SOME LAWS IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

Whether it be fact or fancy that certain natural laws hold over and rule in the realm of spirit (as a prominent English writer has claimed), this truth at least is plainly taught by God's word: that the laws by which the Holy Spirit works on human souls are as inexorable and unchangeable as any laws of nature. Two or three such laws come to notice in this lesson:

1. **GOD'S PROMISES ARE ALL CONDITIONED.** They are simply the statement, in various phraseology, that if you do certain things the Lord will do certain others.

2. **GOD'S PROMISES NEVER FAIL.** If one meet the conditions, he may step out with confidence into the future. Some young women who have more money than brains, and some young men of the same sort, frequent the offices of professional imposters, and pay largely for deceptional glimpses into coming years. They forget that the greatest uncertainty about the future hangs over their own actions. The outcome is never uncertain to one who believes in the promises of God.

3. **GOD RULES IN ALL HUMAN EVENTS** (verse 59). He lives to "maintain the cause of his servants." It is fantastic folly to preach occasional "providential interference" in human affairs, as if God allowed this great terrestrial machine to spin along, and only interfered with it in some emergency when a good man might otherwise suffer. God works through all affairs.

4. **LIFE'S BEST SAFEGUARD IS A HEART PERFECT WITH THE LORD.** The man whose heart is in harmony with God's will may make some blunders, but he will not willingly offend his God, and no real failure can befall him. God's cause is infallible, and if your cause is identical with his you cannot fail.

5. **JEHOVAH IS THE UNIVERSAL LORD** (verse 60). Solomon knew very well that Jehovah was the Queen of Sheba's God, whether that queen worshiped him or not; that he was as really the God of the Phœnicians and Arabs who came as traders to his capital as he was of the bejeweled and mitered high priest who served in the holy temple. Let us not forget that God is the God of the heathen to-day, though unacknowledged by them.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

Every building represents an idea; for example, the capitol at Washington represents government; Cologne cathedral represents worship; the Washington Monument represents the honor given to a great man.

What was represented by the temple on Mount Moriah?

I. **It represented God's presence.** That was the age of the Church's childhood, when visible emblems were necessary. Hence there must be a building with candlestick, table, and golden altar, and the ark within the veil, to symbolize or shadow forth the actual presence of God in the midst of his people.

II. **It represented God's glory.** Hence it must be "exceeding magnificent" (1 Chron. 22. 5) to show forth the divine majesty. The most precious materials were employed, the most splendid ornamentation provided, in order to convey a conception of God's greatness and glory.

III. **It represented God's mercy.** This was shown by the altar, where man could come before God as to a king, and present his supplication through a mediator (verse 54).

IV. **It represented God's fulfillment of promise.** Verses 55, 56. Five centuries before God promised to Israel a permanent home and a wide empire on the mountains of Canaan. The long-delayed fulfillment had come at last, when the temporary tabernacle was succeeded by the glorious house to stand for ages. This building was the token that God had kept his word to his people.

V. **It represented God's kingly authority.** Verses 57-61. The throne of Israel was

not like other thrones. Its king ruled not in his own might, by the power of the strongest, but as the viceroy and representative of the true, invisible King, the Lord Jehovah.

VI. It represented God's care. Verses 59, 60. But if the temple showed forth God as their ruler, it showed him forth also as their guardian and protector. He dwelt in his temple as a king in his castle, ever watching over and caring for his people.

VII. It represented God's salvation for sinners. Verses 62, 63. In the court of the temple stood an altar, and on the altar was laid a sacrifice, an image of the coming One who should lay down his life and offer himself for sinners, and open the way for men into the holiest of all.

"THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE."

THE TEMPLE ON MORIAH.

1. REVERENCED AS HOLY.
2. A PLACE OF UNCEASING PRAYER.
3. EXCLUSIVELY THE LORD'S.
4. FILLED WITH THE DIVINE PRESENCE.
5. A PROPHETIC SYMBOL.
6. TRANSIENT IN FORM.
7. PERPETUAL IN PURPOSE.

THE TEMPLE OF MY BODY.

1.-? 2.-? 3.-? 4.-? 5.-? 6.-? 7.-?

"KNOW YE NOT THAT YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD."

LESSON VII.—NOVEMBER 15.

GOD'S BLESSING UPON SOLOMON.—1 KINGS 9. 1-9.

[Read the whole chapter.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.—Prov. 10. 22.

LESSON HYMN.—

Enter thy temple, glorious King! And write thy name upon its shrine,
Thy peace to shed, thy joy to bring, And seal its courts forever thine.
Abide with us, O Lord, we pray, Our strength, our comfort, and our light;
Sun of our joy's unclouded day! Star of our sorrow's troubled night!
Grant us to walk in peace and love, And find, at last, some humble place
In that great temple built above, Where dwell thy saints before thy face.

—Mrs. Emily H. Miller.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (November 9), God's Blessing upon Solomon, 1 Kings 9. 1-9. *Tuesday*, Wisdom and understanding, Deut. 4. 1-10. *Wednesday*, Conditions of prosperity, Deut. 11. 13-21. *Thursday*, Blessing of the Lord, Deut. 28. 1-14. *Friday*, Warnings fulfilled, 2 Kings 25. 1-10. *Saturday*, The heathen reproaching, Jer. 22. 1-9. *Sunday*, Godliness is profitable, Psalm 112.

Authorized Version.

1 And ¹it came to pass, when Sol^o-mon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, ²and the king's house, and ³all Sol^o-mon's desire which he was pleased to do,

Revised Version.

1 ¹And it came to pass, when Sol^o-mon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all Sol^o-mon's ²desire which he was pleased

¹ 2 Chron. 7. 11, etc.—² Chap. 7. 1.—³ 2 Chron. 8. 6.

¹ See 2 Chron. 7. 11, etc.—² Or, *delight*.

I. A PROMISE. VERSES 1-5.

1. When Solomon had finished . . . all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do— Compare 2 Chron. 7. 11-22. Solomon was a great builder. He erected public works "in all the lands of his dominions" (1 Kings 9. 19)—reservoirs, aqueducts, store cities, fortresses, mer-

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
2 That the LORD appeared to Sol'o-mon the second time, ⁴ as he had appeared unto him at Gib'e-on.	2 to do, that the LORD appeared to Sol'o-mon the second time, as he had appeared unto
3 And the LORD said unto him, ⁵ I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that	3 him at Gib'e-on. And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy sup-
4 Chap. 3. 5.— ⁵ 2 Kings 20. 5; Psalm 10. 17.	

chant ships, palaces; and, chief of all, the great temple of Jehovah. The vision which we are now to study took place, as we are particularly told, when the building of these had been finished. It is true that from the phraseology of the promise and warning here given, it might at first appear that these were made to Solomon immediately after the dedication of the temple. And as we are told in one place that the temple was seven years in building, and as this vision seems to be dated twenty years after the beginning of that great work (compare verse 1 of this chapter with verse 10), some scholars have assumed that for some reason thirteen years passed after the completion of the temple before its dedication. *Rawlinson, Lumby*, and other ingenious writers have constructed a most fanciful theory which serves them as an explanation of this delay. They think that the most of these thirteen years were required by King Hiram, with the primitive methods then depended upon, to cast all the metal work required for the temple, the greater part of which was in the shape of utensils of various sorts, things unconnected with the actual building. This work from its nature (for nearly all the articles were elaborately decorated) could be undertaken only by persons specially skilled, of whom the number would be limited, and therefore the work would spread over a long time. But closer study of this passage and its surroundings makes this theory improbable, and throws us back on the simplest interpretation of the first verse. There seems to have been no reason whatever immediately after the dedication for such a warning and threat as we have in verses 6-9. That some words of this revelation seem like a detailed answer to the dedicatory prayer is true, but they were just as appropriate if, as we suppose, they were spoken at a late date in Solomon's reign, after he had attained his proudest fame, and when he was, by the very reason of his power and glory, more than ever exposed to apostasy. The allusions to the various petitions of the dedicatory prayer seem natural when we remember (1) that that prayer was largely modeled on the curses and blessings which are to be found in Deuteronomy and other books of the Pentateuch; and (2) that the prayer itself at once took its place in the national literature among the very greatest productions; the most glorious forthputting of Solomon's genius and piety in connection with the most glorious event of his reign. Indeed, there is a lofty and beautiful sense in which this whole vision may be regarded as an answer to the petition of verse 59 in our last lesson. The "words" Solomon spoke on that high and holy day had, as he requested, remained in the presence of Jehovah his God day and night for thirteen years; and now, when the splendors of luxury were weakening the moral nature of king and people, they presented themselves to God as living petitions; and here is God's answer. Everything considered, therefore, we believe, as was said in the last lesson, that the temple was dedicated immediately upon its completion, and that this vision was granted to Solomon thirteen years afterward.

2. The Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon—That is, "in a dream by night" (1 Kings 3. 5). Solomon had received at least one message during the building of the temple, but no such memorable vision as that of Gibeon had again come to him till now. "These two appearances to Solomon marked two memorable turning points in his career. One, given him in the simplicity of his youth (1 Kings 3. 7), lifted him into wisdom and favor with both God and man; the other, given in the blaze of his worldly glory, was, alas! soon followed by shameful idolatries. Like Saul, when he was little in his own eyes the Lord made him great (1 Sam. 15. 17); but when exalted among men he lightly observed the divine counsels."—*Terry*.

3. I have heard thy prayer—Study carefully the fuller report of this vision in Chroni-
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Authorized Version.

thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, ⁶ to put my name there forever; ⁷ and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

4 And if thou wilt ⁸ walk before me, ⁹ as Da'vid thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments;

Revised Version.

plication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be 4 there perpetually. And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as Da'vid thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my

* Chap. 8. 29.—† Dent. 11. 12.—‡ Gen. 17. 1.—§ Chap. 11. 3. 6, 38; 14. 8; 15. 5.



THE LAND OF EGYPT.

cles. **Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually**—Solomon's prayer had been that God's eyes might be directed toward the temple perpetually (1 Kings 8. 29); God's answer is, "Not mine eyes only, but mine eyes *and mine heart*." This promise, like all God's promises, was sacredly kept. Solomon on behalf of Israel had offered the house to Jehovah "forever," in perpetuity; to be, like the keepsake of a reverent lover, a fresh offering to the Beloved One every morning through all the years. In this way Jehovah accepted it—not at all for its financial value, but for the love and adoration it represented; accepted it "forever," renewing his gracious acceptance with every recurring daily sacrifice. But there came an era of national apostasy. The marble towers and golden inlay still glowed and glistened on Moriah's top; but the temple was no longer the token of Israel's love; and so, being no longer offered, it was no longer accepted. It was left "desolate" at last, but God's "heart" lingered there till long after Israel's heart had deserted it.

4. **If thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked**—David was very far from being perfect even by the liberal moral standards of his time, as we have had frequent occasion to see in studying his career. But he was conspicuous for **integrity of heart and uprightness,**

Authorized Version.

5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Is'ra-el forever, ¹⁰ as I promised to Da'vid thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Is'ra-el.

6 ¹¹ But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them;

Revised Version.

5 statutes and my judgments; then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom over Is'ra-el forever; according as I ¹⁰ promised to Da'vid thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Is'

6 ra-el. But if ye shall turn away from following me, ye or your children, and not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but shall go and serve

¹⁰ 2 Sam. 7. 12, 16; chap. 2. 4; 6. 12; 1 Chron. 22. 10; Psalm 132. 12.—¹¹ 2 Sam. 7. 14; 2 Chron. 7. 19, 20; Psalm 89. 30, etc.

³ Or, *spake concerning*.

in that he never wavered in his loyalty to Jehovah; he never coquetted with idolatrous practices; he never faltered in his allegiance to the truth. He ran so fast that sometimes he stumbled; he became intoxicated with life's luxury, and sometimes staggered; on certain sadly conspicuous occasions he fell; but he never lay; "When I fall I shall rise" was his motto; and no sooner had he arisen than the fight for Jehovah began again. Not a perfect soldier in truth, but a thoroughly committed soldier, with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength on the right side. The last part of this verse is an echo of David's last words (1 Kings 2. 3, 4).

Illustration 241. "Integrity of heart." "We read a pretty story of Saint Anthony, who, being in the wilderness, led there a very hard and straight life, inasmuch as none at that time did the like; to whom came a voice from heaven saying, 'Anthony, thou art not so perfect as is a cobbler that dwelleth at Alexandria.' Anthony hearing this rose up forthwith and took his staff and went till he came to Alexandria, where he found the cobbler. The cobbler was astonished to see so reverend a father to come into his house. Then Anthony said unto him, 'Come and tell me thy whole conversation and how thou spendest thy time.' 'Sir,' said the cobbler, 'as for me, good works I have none, for my life is but simple and slender. I am but a poor cobbler. In the morning when I arise I pray for the whole city wherein I dwell, especially for all such neighbors and poor friends as I have. After, I set me at my labor, where I spend the whole day in getting of my living, and keep me from all falsehood, for I hate nothing so much as I do deceitfulness. Wherefore, when I make to any man a promise I keep it and do it truly, and so spend my time poorly with my wife and children, whom I teach and instruct, so far as my wit will serve me, to fear and dread God. This is the sum of my simple life.' In this story you see how God loveth those that follow their vocation and live uprightly, in integrity of heart, without any falsehood in their dealing. This Anthony was a great and holy man, yet this cobbler was as much esteemed before God as he."—*Hugh Latimer*.

5. There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.—2 Sam. 7. 12, 16; 1 Kings 2. 4; 6. 12; Psalm 132. 12, but the primary reference is to 1 Kings 8. 25.

Illustration 242. But better, even, than the promised permanency of the throne was the promised companionship of God. "It was the speech of Paulinus when his city was taken by the barbarians, 'Lord, let me not be troubled for my silver and gold which I have lost, for thou art all things.' As Noah, when the whole world was overwhelmed with water, had a fair epitome of it in the ark, having all sorts of beasts and fowls there, so he that in a deluge hath God to be his God hath the original of all mercies. He who enjoyeth the ocean may rejoice, though some drops are taken from him."—*George Swinnoch*.

II. A WARNING. VERSES 6-9.

6. But if ye shall at all turn from following me.—The Authorized Version entirely misrepresents the meaning here; it is literally, If to turn ye shall turn; that is, If ye shall altogether, completely, and permanently apostatize. Compare 2 Chron. 7. 19; 2 Sam. 7. 14, 15. See the parallel passage in 2 Chron. 7. 19, "If ye turn away, and forsake my statutes." The Israelites were not cut off until the hour of entire defection came. Ye or your children—"As the promises given are to us and our children (Acts 2. 39), so are the threatenings."—*Rawlinson*.

Illustration 243. The beginning of nearly all national as of all personal sin is heedlessness. "It is ordinary with many to commend the sermon to others' ears, but few commend it to their own hearts. It is morally true what the 'Christian Tell-Truth' relates: A servant coming from church praeseth the sermon to his master. He asks him what was the text. 'Nay,' quoth the servant, 'it was be-

Authorized Version.

7 ¹² Then will I cut off Is'ra-el out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed ¹³ for my name, will I cast out of my sight; ¹⁴ and Is'ra-el shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:

8 And ¹⁵ at this house, which is high, everyone that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, ¹⁶ Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house?

Revised Version.

7 other gods, and worship them: then will I cut off Is'ra-el out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Is'ra-el shall be a proverb and a byword among all peoples: ⁸ and though this house be so high, yet shall everyone that passeth by it be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to

¹² Deut. 4. 26; 2 Kings 17. 23; 25. 21.—¹³ Jer. 7. 14.—¹⁴ Deut. 28. 37; Psalm 44. 14.—¹⁵ 2 Chron. 7. 21.—¹⁶ Deut. 29. 24-26; Jer. 22. 8, 9.

⁴ Or, and this house shall be high; every one, etc.

gun before I came in.' 'What, then, was his conclusion?' He answered, 'I came out before it was done.' 'But what said he in the midst?' 'Indeed, I was asleep in the midst.' Many crowd to get into the church, but make no room for the sermon to get into them."—*Thomas Adams*.

Illustration 244. God never really abandons any, though poor souls sometimes abandon him. "A heathen could say when a bird frightened by a hawk flew into his bosom, 'I will not betray thee unto thine enemy, seeing thou comest for sanctuary unto me.' How much less will God yield up a soul unto its enemy when it takes sanctuary in his name, saying, 'Lord, I am hunted with such a temptation, dogged with such a lust; either thou must pardon it, or I am damned; mortify it, or I shall be a slave to it; take me into the bosom of thy love for Christ's sake; castle me in the arms of thy everlasting strength. It is in thy power to save me from or give me into the hands of my enemy. I have no confidence in myself or any other. Into thy hands I commit my cause, my life, and rely on thee.' This dependence of a soul undoubtedly will awaken the almighty power of God for such a one's defense. He hath sworn the greatest oath that can come out of his blessed lips, even by himself, that such as 'flee for refuge' to hope in him shall have 'strong consolation' (Heb. 6. 17, 18)."—*William Gurnall*.

7. Then will I cut off Israel.—We have once more a passage parallel to Deuteronomy (4. 26; 28. 37, 45, 63), where "an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword" occurs as here. **This house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight**—This is the very opposite of what the king had prayed for, and must have carried with it to Solomon's mind the idea of utter destruction. **A proverb and a byword**—"The very name Israel will become a proverbial expression significant of disastrous failure; nay, more—a byword, a pointed, sarcastic term, ever suggestive of scorn and mockery."—*Terry*. See Isa. 14. 4; Micah 6. 16.

Illustration 245. Israel expected great delights from the sins which alienated it from God, but got great sorrows also. "Plutarch tells of Tarpela, a vestal nun, who bargained with the enemy to betray the capitol of Rome to them in case she might have the golden bracelets on their left hands, which they promised; and being entered into the capitol, they threw not only their bracelets, but their bucklers, too, upon her, through the weight whereof she was pressed to death. God often lets men have the golden bracelets of worldly substance, the weight whereof sinks them into hell. O, let us get our eyes 'fixed' and our hearts 'united' to God, the supreme good. This is to pursue blessedness as in a chase."—*Thomas Watson*.

Illustration 246. "The fabulist tells a story of the hedgehog that came to the cony-burrows in stormy weather and desired harbor, promising that he would be a quiet guest; but when once he had gotten entertainment he did set up his prickles, and did never leave till he had thrust the poor conies out of their burrows. So sin, though it hath many fair pleas to insinuate and wind itself into the heart, yet as soon as you have let it in, this thorn will never cease pricking till it hath choked all good beginnings and thrust all religion out of your hearts."—*Thomas Watson*.

Illustration 247. Sin and shame. "Diogenes once spied a young man coming out of a tavern or place of entertainment, who, perceiving himself observed by the philosopher, with some confusion stopped back again, that he might, if possible, preserve his fame with that severe person. But Diogenes told him, 'The more you go back the longer you are in the place where you are ashamed to be seen.' He that conceals his sin still retains that which he counts his shame and burden."—*Jeremy Taylor*.

8. This house, which is high.—Hebrew, "This house shall be high." That is, which is conspicuous. It is equivalent to saying, "This house shall be as notable in its ruin as in its glory." **Everyone that passeth by it shall be astonished**—They shall be unable to express their horror

Authorized Version.

9 And they shall answer, "Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshiped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

Revised Version.

9 this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, which brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshiped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought all this evil upon them.

1st 2 Chron. 7. 22; Jer. 2. 19; Lam. 2. 16, 17; Ezek. 36. 17, 20.

at the disaster. "It shall be exposed aloft, on its high hill, as a laughing-stock to the scorn of passers-by, who will be astonished at it."—*Wordsworth*.

9. This verse, as well as verse 8, is remarkably parallel to the language of Deut. 29. 21-26. Solomon in his prayer had referred repeatedly to the great deliverance from Egypt. Note verses 16, 21, 51, and 53.

ONE INEVITABLE PENALTY OF TRANSGRESSION IS CONTEMPT AND SCORN. The wicked may be in honor now, but the time is coming when they "shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt."

"WHAT AN EVIDENCE OF THE TRUTH OF GOD THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL SUPPLIES! 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears' (Luke 4. 21). 'A proverb and a byword'—eighteen centuries at least testify to the truth of these words. 'Cast out of my sight;' let the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem explain to us these words. 'Never,' says Josephus, 'did any other city suffer such miseries.' And there is not a country of Europe, there is hardly a city, in which the history of the Jew is not traced in blood, written within and without in 'mourning and lamentation and woe.' Claudius expelled them from Rome (Acts 18. 2); Edward I drove them out of Guienne and England. Sir Walter Scott's romance, 'Ivanhoe,' gives some idea of their treatment in England; but a romance could not record a tithe of the horrors of which Clifford's Tower in York or the Jews' house in Lincoln could tell. And yet it is allowed that they have always been treated more tenderly in England than in the rest of Europe. But even there, and down to the present day, the word 'Jew' is too often a name of hate. In America, while they prosper financially, they are subjected to many unjust and cruel antipathies. In Servia, in Moldavia, and Wallachia they are still the objects of fierce persecution and not always unmerited obloquy. Even the 'Anti-Semitic League,' organized in Germany during recent years, is a part of the 'severity' of God, a proof of the 'sure word of prophecy.' In Jerusalem, again, the metropolis of their race, they are accounted the filth and offscouring of all things. At the Greek Easter the refrain is often heard in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, 'O Jews, O Jews, your feast is a feast of apes.' What a commentary, too, is the Jews' 'place of wailing' on this Scripture! The 'holy and beautiful house' a desolation, the temple precincts trodden under foot of the Gentiles! Conqueror after conqueror, pilgrim after pilgrim, has asked the question, 'Wherefore hath the Lord done thus?' while the ever-extending miles of gravestones and the ever-lengthening pavement of tombs and sepulchers answer, 'Because they have forsaken the Lord their God,' etc. (verse 9; Jer. 22. 8, 9).

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast, When will ye fly away and be at rest?

The wild dove hath its nest, the fox its cave, Mankind their coun'y—Israel but the grave.

In the history of the Israelitish nation we may see the principle of God's dealing with individual souls. But we may also read in it a warning for the Christian Church (Rev. 2. 5)."—*Hammond*.

Illustration 248. "When I was in Belfast I knew a doctor who had a friend, a leading surgeon there, and he told that the surgeon's custom was, before performing any operation, to say to the patient, 'Take a good look at the wound and then fix your eyes on me, and don't take them off till I get through the operation.' I thought at the time that was a good illustration. Sinner, take a good look at the wound to-night, and then fix your eyes on Christ and don't take them off. It is better to look at the remedy than at the wound."—*D. L. Moody*.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

Two topics are interwoven throughout these verses : 1. What God rewards. 2. How God rewards.

I. What God rewards. What are those qualities and acts which God recognizes with favor? 1. *Perseverance in welldoing.* Verses 1, 2. Solomon had finished the noble work which he had begun, that of building a house for the Lord; and for his faithfulness he is promised a reward. Let us not be weary in welldoing, for we too shall reap. 2. *Prayer.* Verse 3. "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication." When a man seeks God, God seeks that man. He has an interest in every soul that lifts up its cry toward him. 3. *Obedience.* Verses 4, 5. "Integrity and uprightness," which God commends, are found in the path of obedience to his will. No man can be without a master, for the life of license and of freedom from restraint is in reality a service of Satan. God rewards those who serve him. 4. *Loyalty.* Verses 6-9. In that age the greatest stress was laid upon the worship of God as distinct from the worship of images, because idolatry tended toward the grossest vices, and was in itself an act of disloyalty toward the Lord Jehovah. The worshiper of the Lord would grow upward to higher character, while the worshiper of idols would surely degenerate.

II. How God rewards those who are faithful to him is also shown in this lesson. 1. *He listens to their prayers.* Verse 3. How great the honor when the King of heaven inclines his ear to the cry of an earth-born man! 2. *He honors their work.* Verse 3. He accepts the service which they render, and by accepting it consecrates it. 3. *He dwells with them.* Verse 4. He takes up his abode in the house which they have builded for his honor. 4. *He bestows upon them promises.* Verses 4, 5. He lifts up before them new heights of privilege and blessing in his word. 5. *He gives to them warnings.* Verses 6-9. It is as great a token of regard and favor to point out danger as to promise blessing. He is our true friend who tells us of perils that we may shun them. 6. *He gives to them discipline.* Verses 6-9. Not as punishment, but as training, did God bring captivity and suffering upon his people; for out of the fire they emerged a new Israel, a holy "remnant."

"THE BLESSING OF THE LORD, IT MAKETH RICH."

BLESSING.

"MINE EYES AND MINE HEART SHALL BE THERE PERPETUALLY."

CURSE.

"CAST IT OUT OF MY SIGHT."

"WHY HATH THE LORD DONE THUS"
"BECAUSE THEY FORSOOK THE LORD."

LESSON VIII.—NOVEMBER 22.

REWARDS OF OBEDIENCE.—Prov. 3. 1-17.

[Read Prov. 3. 1-35.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
—Prov. 3. 6.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

THIS DISCOURSE "embraces exhortations to obedience (verses 1-4); to reliance on God (verses 5, 6); against self-sufficiency and self-dependence (verses 7, 8); to self-sacrificing devotion to God (verses 9, 10); to patient submission to God's afflictive dispensations (verses 11, 12); and concludes with pointing out the gain of Wisdom, her incomparable value, and wherein that

value consists (verses 13-17). It is noticeable that in each case the exhortation is accompanied with a corresponding promise of reward (verses 2, 4, 6, 8, 10), and these promises are brought forward with the view to encourage the observance of the duties recommended or enjoined. Jehovah is the central point to which all the exhortations converge."—*Deane*.

TEACHER'S THOUGHT.—"Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord." Verse 7; Isa. 5. 21.

ROOT THOUGHTS.—1. The *source* of wisdom—God. Verse 19. 2. The *fruit* of wisdom in God—CREATION. Verse 19. 3. The *nature* of wisdom in man. Verses 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 11. 4. The *worth* of wisdom to man. Verses 10, 14-16.

SUGGESTED TOPICS.—1. **Worth of wisdom.** "More precious than riches." Verse 15. See Job 28. 12-19; Prov. 8. 10, 11; 4. 7; 16. 16; Eccles. 2. 13; 7. 19; 9. 18. 2. **Worth of chastisement.** "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth." Verse 12. See Job 5. 17; Heb. 12. 6-8, 11; Psalm 119. 67, 71; Jer. 31. 18, 19; 1 Peter 1-7; Phil. 1. 12-14; 2 Cor. 12. 7.

WORKING OUTLINE.—

WISDOM
CONDUCTIVE TO
P
ROLONGED LIFE.
PROSPERITY.
E
ALTH.
ONOR.
H
APPINESS.

1. PROLONGED LIFE.

Length of days ... in her ... hand. Verse 16.
"Fear of the Lord prolongeth." Prov. 10. 27.
"He is thy life." Deut. 30. 20.
"That ... days may be long." Exod. 20. 12.
"Many days in the land." Jer. 35. 7.
"Years ... increased." Prov. 9. 11.
"Upon the earth." Deut. 4. 40.
"Even hoar heads." Isa. 46. 4.
"With staff ... for very age." Zech. 8. 4.

2. PROSPERITY.

Thy barns be filled. Verse 10.
"Godliness is profitable." 1 Tim. 4. 8.
"Shalt have good success." Josh. 1. 8.
"Thy basket ... store." Deut. 28. 5.
"It shall be well." Isa. 3. 10.
"Blessing of the Lord." Prov. 10. 22.
"Maketh rich." 1 Sam. 2. 7.
"Giveth ... to get wealth." Deut. 8. 18.
"Shall supply all ... need." Phil. 4. 19.

3. PEACE.

Her paths are peace. Verse 17.
"Great peace have they." Psalm 119. 165.
"Peace ... quietness." Isa. 32. 17.
"Fruit of righteousness." James 3. 18.
"Fruit of the Spirit." Gal. 5. 22.
"The Lord of peace." 2 Thess. 3. 16.
"Good will to man." Luke 2. 14.

"Not as the world giveth." John 14. 17.
"The end ... peace." Psalm 37. 37.

4. HEALTH.

It shall be health. Verse 8.
"The tongue of the wise." Prov. 12. 18.
"Health shall spring forth." Isa. 58. 8.
"I will cure them." Jer. 33. 6.
"From the pestilence." Psalm 91. 3-6.
"Heal ... thy wounds." Jer. 30. 17.
"All thy diseases." Psalm 103. 3.
"Heal me, O Lord." Jer. 17. 14.
"The broken in heart." Psalm 147. 3.

5. HONOR.

Her left hand ... honor. Verse 16.
"Glory and honor." Psalm 8. 5.
"For them that honor me." 1 Sam. 2. 30.
"If any man serve me." John 12. 26.
"Followeth after ... mercy." Prov. 21. 21.
"By humility and fear." Prov. 22. 4.
"Glory, honor, peace." Rom. 2. 10.
"Praise of God." 1 Cor. 4. 5.
"A crown of glory." Prov. 4. 9.

6. HAPPINESS.

1.) *Happy the man that findeth.* Verse 13.
"Whose God is the Lord." Psalm 144. 15.
"Whose hope ... the Lord." Psalm 146. 5.
"Whom God correcteth." Job 5. 17.
"Poor, meek, merciful." Matt. 5. 3-12.
2.) *Everyone that retaineth.* Verse 18.
"That feareth the Lord." Psalm 128. 1-3.
"That keepeth the law." Prov. 29. 18.
"Happy are ye." John 13. 17.
"A doer of the work." James 1. 25.

THOUGHTS FOR WISDOM SEEKERS.—1. *Wisdom found only in the service of the Lord.* "Keep my commandments." Verse 1. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111. 10. 2. *Wisdom shown by a merciful heart.* "Mercy ... upon the table of thine heart." Verse 3. "Be ye therefore merciful." Luke 6. 36. 3. *Wisdom shown by humble trust.* "Trust in the Lord ... not wise in thine own eyes." Verses 5, 7. "Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust." Psalm 40. 4. 4. *Wisdom shown by an upright life.* "Fear the Lord ... depart from evil." Verse 7. "He that walketh righteously ... shall dwell on high." Isa. 33. 15, 16. 5. *Wisdom shown by a chastened spirit.* "Despise not the chas-

tening of the Lord." Verse 11. "It yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Heb. 12. 11. 6. *Wisdom shown by a cheerful mind.* "Happy is the man." Verse 13. "Delight thyself . . . in the Lord." Psalm 37. 4. 7. *Wisdom worth the wealth of worlds.* "All the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." Verse 15. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16. 26.

LESSON HYMN.—

Lord, how secure and blest are they Who feel the joys of pardoned sin !
Should storms of wrath shake earth and sea, Their minds have heaven and peace within.
How oft they look to the heavenly hills, Where groves of living pleasure grow ;
And longing hopes, and cheerful smiles, Sit undisturbed upon their brow !
They scorn to seek earth's golden toys, But spend the day, and share the night,
In numbering o'er the richer joys That heaven prepares for their delight.—*Isaac Watts.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (November 16), Rewards of Obedience, Prov. 3. 1-17. *Tuesday*, God's word in the heart, Deut. 6. 1-13. *Wednesday*, Blessings to the obedient, Deut. 6. 17-25. *Thursday*, The safe way, Prov. 3. 19-26. *Friday*, Despise not discipline, Heb. 12. 1-11. *Saturday*, Doers of the word, James 1. 19-27. *Sunday*, Friends of Jesus, John 15. 1-14.

Authorized Version.

- 1 My son, forget not my law ; ¹ but let thine heart keep my commandments :
- 2 For length of days, and ^a long life, and ² peace, shall they add to thee.

Revised Version.

- 1 My son, forget not my ¹ law ;
But let thine heart keep my commandments :
- 2 For length of days, and years of life,
And peace, shall they add to thee.

^a Deut. 8. 1 ; 20. 16, 20.—^a Heb. *years of life*.—^a Psalm 119. 165.

¹ Or, *teaching*.

I. THE VALUE OF LAW. VERSES 1-4.

1. **My son**—The father is talking to his child, whom he would lead into the wisest and best, and therefore the happiest, of lives. This is the admonition of tenderest love. **Forget not**—Neglect not. **My law**—My teaching ; my doctrine. **Let thine heart keep**—Moral teaching amounts to little unless the heart love it. Obeying with the "heart" is the only truly acceptable obedience (Matt. 15. 7, 8). **My commandments**—My precepts as expressed in the injunctions beginning in verse 3. "My son, remember ; love ; obey."

2. **For length of days, and long life, and peace**—A long and peaceful life is the reward of walking in true wisdom. This naturally follows. For a wise life obeys God, and therefore refrains from vice, dissoluteness, intemperance, and other sins which create disease and hasten death. It obeys the laws of physical life, and is temperate, chaste, and self-controlled. It cultivates the higher nature, and aims at a likeness to Christ. Such a course tends, in the order of things which God has established, to prolong life. Nevertheless, "this promise of prolongation of life is not to be pressed historically as applying to every individual case, but is to be taken as indicating the tendency of keeping the divine precepts. The Authorized Version does not fully bring out the sense of the original, for there is practically no difference in meaning between the English phrases 'length of days' and 'long life.' The idea conveyed in the second expression, 'years of life,' is that of material prosperity. These years will be years of life in its truest sense, as one of true happiness and enjoyment, free from distracting cares, illness, and other drawbacks."—*Deane*. "It has sometimes been said, with a false antithesis, that 'prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity the blessing of the New' (*Bacon*), and texts like this seem at first to confirm that opinion. Under both dispensations, however, there has been the same admixture of good and evil. The complaints of Job, of Asaph (Psalm 78), of the Preacher (Eccles. 9. 2), show that there was no difference in the providential order of the world before and after the coming of our Lord ; and Paul's assertion in the midst

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: 2 bind them about thy neck; 4 write them upon the table of thine heart:	3 Let not 2 mercy and truth forsake thee: Bind them about thy neck; Write them upon the table of thine heart:
4 5 So shalt thou find favor and 6 good un- derstanding in the sight of God and man.	4 So shalt thou find favor and 3 good under- standing In the sight of God and man.
5 6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; 7 and lean not unto thine own understanding.	5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, And lean not upon thine own understand- ing:
<small>2 Exod. 13. 9; Deut. 6. 8; chap. 6. 91; 7. 3.—4 Jer. 17. 1; 2 Cor. 3. 3.—5 Psalm 111. 10; see 1 Sam. 2. 26; Luke 2. 52; Acts 2. 47; Rom. 14. 18.—6 Or, good success.—7 Psalm 37. 3, 5.— 7 Jer. 9. 23.</small>	<small>3 Or, kindness.—5 Or, good repute.</small>

of all his sufferings is still, as of old, that 'Godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come' (1 Tim. 4. 8).—*Plumptre*.

3. This verse shows us at once that wisdom is not merely knowledge, or prudence, or shrewdness; for two essential elements of moral character are here presented. **Mercy** is the opposite of selfishness and hardness toward others; it is the keeping of all the commandments of the second table; it is helpfulness, forgiveness, sympathy; it is, in fact, LOVE, which is "the fulfilling of the law." **Truth** is character; stability; uprightness; the opposite of all deceit, hypocrisy, and vacillation. How different from mere earthly wisdom, two chief elements of which are: (1) self-seeking, and (2) a lack of particularity as to the means employed. *Zöckler* calls attention to the frequent association of Love and Truth in the Books of Proverbs and Psalms, as for example, Prov. 14. 22; 16. 6; 20. 28; Psalm 25. 10; 40. 11; 57. 4-11; 108. 4; 138. 2. **Bind them** (the mercy and truth) **about thy neck**—As ornaments, necklaces (*Zöckler*). As treasures which, to guard against their loss, one wears attached to one's neck, but hidden in the folds of the garments (*Hitzig*). As a signet carried on a string round the neck (*Delitzsch*). As amulets or talismans, superstitiously worn to ward off danger (*Umbreit*). See Exod. 13. 9 and Deut. 6. 8, the literal interpretation of which originated the strange Hebrew custom of wearing phylacteries (which became a sort of amulets). The first of these four explanations is the most likely, and the injunction then becomes nearly identical with that of Prov. 1. 9, studied October 25. Compare Gen. 41. 42; Ezek. 16. 11; Sol. Song 1. 10; 4. 9. **Write them upon the table of thine heart**—"Inscribe them deeply there; impress them thoroughly and indelibly; make them a part of your heart. The 'table' was the tablet expressly prepared for writing, being polished, corresponding to the writing table of Luke 1. 63, which, however, was covered with wax. The inscription was made with the *stylus*. The same word is used of the 'tables' of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written with the finger of God, and allusion is in all probability made to that fact (Exod. 31. 18; 34. 28). Compare Prov. 7. 3; Jer. 17. 1; 2 Cor. 3. 3."—*Deane*.

4. **So shalt thou find**—No other talisman will be needed. **Favor**—Grace; acceptance.

II. THE VALUE OF FAITH. VERSES 5-10.

5. **Trust in the Lord with all thine heart**—Here is the idea of an absolute consecration to Jehovah, and a hearty, entire dependence upon him for all blessedness. A divided "heart" is not pleasing to him, and brings no blessing. **Lean not unto thine own understanding**—"In this trust in a Will supreme, righteous, loving, is the secret of all true greatness. These verses anticipate the teaching that man is justified by faith. To confide in that Will is to rise out of all the anxieties and plans and fears which surround us when we think of ourselves as the arbiters of our own fortunes, and so 'lean unto our own understanding?' "—*Plumptre*.

Illustration 249. Oriental kings were accustomed to appear in public leaning on the arms of their favorite counselors (2 Kings 5. 18; 7. 2, 17). We are to *use* our understanding, but God is to be our

Authorized Version.

6 ⁸ In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall ⁹ direct thy paths.
7 ¹⁰ Be not wise in thine own eyes: ¹¹ fear the LORD, and depart from evil.
8 It shall be ^chealth to thy navel, and ^d marrow to thy bones.
9 ¹² Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase:

Revised Version.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he shall ⁴ direct thy paths.
7 Be not wise in thine own eyes; Fear the LORD, and depart from evil:
8 It shall be health to thy navel, And ⁵ marrow to thy bones.
9 Honor the LORD with thy substance, And with the first fruits of all thine increase:

^a 1 Chron. 28. 9.—^b Jer. 16. 23.—^c Rom. 12. 16.—^d Job 1. 1; chap. 16. 6.—^e Heb. *medicine*.—^f Heb. *watering, or, moistening*.—^g Job 21. 24.—^h Exod. 22. 29; 23. 19; 34. 26; Deut. 26. 2, etc.; Mal. 3. 10, etc.; Luke 14. 13.

⁴ Or, *make straight or plain*.—⁵ Or, *refreshing*. Heb. *moistening*.

Illustration 250. Many people think they could quietly trust God if some great misfortune came on them, who never exercise or practice that trust in daily life. But faith is a sword which grows rusty if left unused in the scabbard; an arm that loses its power if not kept in constant exercise.

6. In all thy ways—Not in a part only, but in everything, pleasant and unpleasant; every thought, plan, purpose, and act; in personal, family social, religious, and business life (Phil. 4. 6). **Acknowledge him**—Recognize him as Lord and Ruler, submitting thy will and way to his guidance and control. **He shall direct thy paths**—Literally, *smooth thy paths*. Guide thee rightly. The paths may not be just as we would have chosen, but they will prove the best, safest, and happiest in the long run. *How* he will do it, we may not know; but he will surely do it by his word, Spirit, and providence.

Illustration 251. Six passages of Scripture illustrative of verses 5 and 6: 2 Chron. 14. 9-15; 2 Kings. 19. 14, etc.; Ezra 8. 21-23; Gen. 24. 12-27; Neh. 2. 4; 1 Sam. 17. 46.

Illustration 252. "As a very little child, left alone in the street of a great city, can but wander aimlessly about, and will surely fail of reaching home, so we, lost in the maze of this seething struggling, incomprehensible world—world of circumstance and world of thought—can but make vain guesses as to our true course, and are certain to wander from the home of God."—*Clarkson*.

7. Be not wise in thine own eyes—A caution against self-wisdom, which is only a proud self-conceit (Rom. 12. 16). On the other hand, **fear the Lord**; cherish a reverence for his authority and will as wiser than our wisdom. To be "wise in thine own eyes" is to be a fool. A striking illustration of the Gospel character of this book of morals. See Luke 14. 11; 16. 15; 18. 14; 1 Cor. 1. 18-31; 2. 5-14; 8. 2; 1 Peter 5. 5. Instead of this self-conceit the "beginning of wisdom," fearing God, is again enjoined. Such fear will turn us away from evil.

8. Here again is a REWARD: Bodily health (or better, healing), which very likely included also for the ancient mind the thought of health for the soul. The phraseology is strange to our ears, but it is thoroughly Hebraic. The word "belly" is given a similar half-physical, half-spiritual meaning elsewhere; and we ourselves use the word "heart" in a quite parallel fashion, as at once the name of the central organ of the body, of the faculty of human love, and of man's spiritual nature. But as the word rendered *navel* literally means "a cord," some suppose that it should be here rendered sinews, muscles, or tendons, to stand for the fleshy parts of the body in distinction from the framework of bones. **Marrow** means "moisture," it being anciently supposed that in illness the bones were dried up. Compare Job 21. 24; Psalm 102. 3. So the verse means: The fear of the Lord will nourish your **LIFE** in the most comprehensive sense.

9. Honor the Lord with thy substance—By an easy transition the words for "honor" in ancient languages came to mean *give*. Reverence for kings and all in authority was always expressed by gifts; and the gifts advised in this verse were to be expressions of reverence and love. **Substance**, says *Dr. Hunter*, points to capital; **increase** to income. **First fruits**—The Hebrew law required that these should be given to God. See Exod. 23. 14, 16, 19; 22. 29, 30; Lev. 2. 12, 16; 19. 23, 24; Deut. 18. 4, 5. "This was a thank offering for the

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
10 ¹⁴ So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.	10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, And thy fats shall overflow with new wine.
11 ¹⁶ My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:	11 My son, despise not the 'chastening of the LORD; Neither be weary of his reproof:
¹⁴ Deut. 28. 8.— ¹⁵ Job 5. 17; Psalm 94. 12; Heb. 12. 5, 6; Rev. 3. 19.	* Or, instruction.

blessings of life, and a contribution to the support of religion. Such offerings are thoroughly reasonable. The ordinances and ministries of religion being appointed by God for the benefit of men, it is the will of God that they should be supported by men to whom, here and elsewhere, he gives the promise that in proportion to the liberality of their contributions as compared with their means, will he return them liberal dispensations of his providence and grace. Under the old dispensation the return in kind of temporal blessings was prominent, the spiritual being included; under the new, the spiritual blessings returned occupy the foreground, but the temporal, also, are included. He that makes temporal sacrifices for the cause of religion shall receive manifold more in this life, and in the world to come everlasting life (Matt. 19. 29, 30; Mark 10. 29, 30; Luke 18. 29, 30). This is the general rule."—*Hunter*.

SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE. "The subject and principles of systematic beneficence deserve more attention than they have hitherto received from modern Christians. Comparatively few give systematically a percentage of their income gains. This was a principle of the old law, and the proportion was in some particulars definitely determined. Under the new economy the principle is as plainly obligatory as under the old, but each Christian is left to determine for himself what portion he shall devote to the Lord, under the stimulating promise, 'He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully' (2 Cor. 9. 6)."—*Hunter*.

10. Barns are granaries. **Presses** to extract the rich oil of olives were in the mind of the translator; we give on the next page a picture of such presses. But modern scholars incline to understand "vats," into which the wine flowed through a pipe from the wine press. Compare Isa. 5. 2; Judg. 6. 11; Matt. 21. 33. The promise is the same in either case. There shall be ample harvests, in the grain field, in the olive grove, and in the vineyard. Those that honor God by the consecration of their wealth he will honor by a larger prosperity, that they may do more good with it. Many give only of their surplus, or what is convenient.

III. THE VALUE OF CHASTENING. VERSES 11, 12.

11. The teacher now turns to those in adversity. **Despise**, in the original, does not imply contempt, but rather disgust—an impatient fretting and chafing against affliction or disappointment. Jonah, in his bitter anger, first at the sparing of Nineveh, and then at the loss of the gourd, is an exact illustration of it. **Chastening** and **correction**, the object of which is discipline and instruction, may come by illness, bereavement, losses, and calamities of various kinds. We are not, on the one hand, to "despise" it, to regard it lightly, or as of no account; nor, on the other, are we to be **weary** of it, faint under it, and sink into murmurs and gloom?

MISTAKES WE MAY MAKE ABOUT SORROW. "1. We may treat it thoughtlessly, and 'despise . . . the chastening of the Lord' (verse 11). We may allow ourselves to have 'the sorrow of the world,' of which Paul speaks (2 Cor. 7. 10); that is, we may decline to consider what it means; content ourselves with the sullen thought that we have something that we must endure as best we can, not attempting to discover whence it comes or what it means. 2. We may conclude that it is only accidental. This is another way of 'despising the chastening of the Lord.' We may take that view which is intellectually the most easy and spiritually the most barren, and refer our trouble to the 'course of events;' we may recognize no guiding hand, we may decide with oft-handed readiness that we are the unhappy

Authorised Version.

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; ¹⁶even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Revised Version.

12 For whom the LORD loveth he reproveth; Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

¹⁶ Deut. 8. 5.

victims of unkind circumstances, and go on our way 'grinding our teeth, with impatient spirit.' 3. We may be crushed under the weight of it. We may (to use the word in Heb. 12. 5) 'faint' when we are rebuked! We may suffer a spiritual collapse, may meet affliction with an

unmanly spirit of prostration, and, instead of bending bravely beneath the yoke and bearing it, break down utterly and miserably. 4. We may repine under long continuance of it. We may 'be weary' of God's correction. Sometimes, when affliction is long-continued, men feel that either God has nothing to do with them at all, or that he is not regarding their prayer, or that he is punishing them above that which they are able to bear; and they repine, they are weary in their spirit, querulous in their tone, perhaps positively complaining in their speech."—*Clarkson*.

THE ONE RIGHT WAY IN WHICH TO TAKE SORROW. "That way is to accept it as the correction of fatherly kindness. 'For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth,' etc. (verse 12). 1. We may be God's unreconciled children, and he is seeking to win us to himself. 2. Or we may have returned to him, but need fatherly correction. He may be rebuking us for some departure from his will. He may be desirous of removing the spirit of pride or of selfishness or of worldliness, and of leading us along paths of humility, self-surrender, spirituality. Certainly he is seeking our truest welfare, our highest good, our lasting joy. Let each afflicted heart ask, What is the lesson the Father wishes me to learn?"—*Clarkson*. So soon as we are sure that our sorrows are divinely appointed, they cease to be sorrows.

12. For—See the reason (Heb. 12. 5, 6). **Whom the Lord loveth**—All afflictions come from God. Not a stroke can fall on us outside of his permission. His discipline should be taken as proof of his love. Here is the call for the faith which verse 5 requires. Learning to recognize God in all our troubles, and so being led to greater holiness, is a great gain. "It is well to note this first distinct utterance of a truth which has been so full of comfort to many thousands; the summing up of all controversies, like those of Job's friends (Job 5. 17), or our Lord's disciples (John 9. 2), as to the mystery of suffering. To see that it is no proof of the wrath of God, that it is even among the signs and tokens of a love which ordereth all things well, this is what the writer of this portion of the Proverbs was taught to see. It was the lesson which the Book of Job had proclaimed as the issue of many perplexities. Here it enters into the education of every Jewish child taught to acknowledge another Father in heaven chastising him, even as he has been chastised by his earthly father. The apostle writing to the Hebrews can find no stronger comfort (Heb. 12. 6)."—*Plumptre*. And, as has been said, this explanation furnishes the only adequate philosophy of life.

23

Authorized Version.

13 ¹⁷ Happy is the man *that* findeth wisdom, and ^e the man *that* getteth understanding:

14 ¹⁸ For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She *is* more precious than rubies: and ¹⁹ all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 ²⁰ Length of days *is* in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.

Revised Version.

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, And the man that ⁷ getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, And the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than ⁸ rubies: And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor.

¹⁷ Chap. 8. 34, 35. — ^e Heb. *the man that draweth out understanding*. — ¹⁸ Job 28. 18, etc.; Psalm 19. 10; chap. 2. 4; 8. 11, 19; 16. 16. — ¹⁹ Matt. 13. 44. — ²⁰ Chap. 8. 18; 1 Tim. 4. 8.

⁷ Heb. *draweth forth*. — ⁸ See Job 28. 18.

IV. THE VALUE OF WISDOM. VERSES 13-17.



"THE MERCHANDISE OF SILVER."

13. **Happy is the man**—O the blessednesses of the man! *Beda* and *Delitzsch* connect this blessedness immediately with the chastisements of the preceding verse. **Findeth wisdom**—Wisdom in its fullest sense, and so embracing the highest. It takes in all relations of life, both for earth and heaven. It refers to the attainment of the noblest, purest, holiest, grandest manhood and womanhood. Wisdom must be *found*, and therefore it must be sought for. **Getteth** means, as in the margin, "draweth out," that is, out of God's treasury.

14. **Merchandise**—Rather, the profits of merchandise. It is more advantageous to trade in wisdom than in silver. **The gain thereof**—The intrinsic value of. The word for *fine gold* has greatly exercised the ingenuity of scholars. It is *kharuts*, and is thought by some to be the original of our word *carat*. It evidently means the finest and purest gold, and is probably a technical term. Compare the fine parallel passage, Job 28. 12-19. How naturally these verses come from Solomon, in whose reign foreign commerce expanded so greatly, and whose ships "went to Ophir for gold."

15. **Rubies**—The word indicates precious articles of commerce having rosy tints. So our translators guessed "rubies;" most commentators guess *pearls*; while some have fancied *coral*, which was costlier then than it is now. From what little we know of ancient Syrian traffic it seems most probable that the reference is to pearls. It may be, however, that the Hebrew word denotes precious stones in general. The Septuagint so understands it, and renders: "She is more precious than precious stones." **All the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her**—"The comparison, which has arisen from the less to the more valuable, culminates in this comprehensive expression. There is nothing, neither silver, gold, precious stones, nor anything precious, which is an equivalent to wisdom in value. How it shows, when everything is put before us to choose from, that, like Solomon at Gibeon, we should prefer wisdom (1 Kings 3. 11-13)!"—*Pulpit Commentary*.

16. Here wisdom appears as a beautiful queen, with both hands full of gifts, long life in

Authorized Version.

17 ²¹ Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths *are* peace.

Revised Version.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.

²¹ Matt. 11. 29, 30.

one, riches and honor in the other. The truly wise man, other things being equal, has the best chance of obtaining these, for his wisdom teaches him purity, temperance, industry, frugality, economy, liberality, and the fear of God; all of which made toward earthly prosperity and happiness. "It was just," says *Patrick*, "to place length of days in her right hand; that is, to give it the precedence, because it was the chief promise of the law, and, indeed, the most desirable of earthly blessings, without which nothing can be enjoyed; after this follow wealth and reputation, things that men mightily covet, which he places in her left hand, as inferior blessings, but which come also from her gift."

17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness—She requires nothing that is unpleasant to rightly disposed minds, and gives abundance of true pleasure. **Ways** are public roads; **paths** are byways. In all circumstances of life, small and great, true wisdom will make its possessor happy. **Peace**—Both in the final result and in the way to it; peace of soul, and peace with God. The Lord graciously takes care of this.

GENERAL LESSONS.—1. No one can be truly wise who does not become a Christian. One may be very wise as a man, a scholar, a statesman, or in business affairs, but if he neglects religion he is very unwise, for he leaves out of view his relations to God and eternity, which are more important than all others (Job 28. 28; Psalm 2. 10, 11; Prov. 8. 36; Luke 12. 20, 21; James 3. 17). 2. What great blessedness awaits the truly wise man, who, while making the most of himself for this world, is more careful to do it for eternity, and so seeks Jesus Christ first of all. Long life and other temporal blessings fall to him here in the order of God's providence, and eternal blessedness in heaven. With Christ is everything (Deut. 4. 5, 6; Prov. 2. 6, 7; Dan. 12. 3; Matt. 6. 32).

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The Book of Proverbs deals with practical affairs. Its horizon is the life that now is, and it constantly affirms that godliness is profitable.

In this lesson we notice **Six Rewards of Righteousness** in the present life.

I. Long Life. Verses 1, 2. Obedience to God promotes length of days. More sober men than drunkards live to old age; more godly men than votaries of pleasure wear the crown of the hoary head. The tables of life insurance afford abundant proof of this statement.

II. Honor of Men. Verses 3, 4. Who are the esteemed, respected, beloved men and women of any community? They are not the wicked people, but the good. Scoffers may sneer and enemies may persecute; but in the general estimate it will be found that those who serve God and work righteousness receive honor from men.

III. Divine Guidance. Verses 5, 6.

He who looks to God, leans upon God, and acknowledges God, can confidently expect God's care and direction. How great is the peace of that man who can cast all his care on One who careth for him!

IV. Physical Health. Verses 7, 8. The fear of God makes the care of the body as the temple of the soul a matter of religious duty. Sin promotes disease; especially do certain dark vices waste the physical resources. Pleasure draws drafts

"WISDOM DIVINE! WHO TELLS THE PRICE
OF WISDOM'S COSTLY MERCHANDISE?"

FOUR BLESSED
REWARDS { OF OBEDIENCE,
OF FAITH,
OF CHASTENING,
OF WISDOM.

"WISDOM TO SILVER WE PREFER,
AND GOLD IS DROSS COMPARED TO HER."

upon the bank of the body which must be paid with interest when they mature; and nature is an inexorable usurer.

V. Worldly Prosperity. Verses 9, 10. Some people believe that riches are gotten only through selfishness and dishonesty. It is a mistake. For one man who amasses wealth in ways of evil doing there are hundreds who come to poverty. Both the word of God and the lives of successful men show that honesty, righteousness, religion are factors in success.

VI. True Happiness. Verses 11-17. "Happy is the man." Not every man who serves God will be rich, for riches may prove a curse and not a blessing. But everyone who possesses the true wisdom of an intelligent faith will enjoy happiness in God's service; and his happiness the world can never take from him.



LESSON IX.—NOVEMBER 29.

THE FAME OF SOLOMON.—1 KINGS 10. 1-10.

[Read chapter 10. 1-29.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Behold, a greater than Solomon is here.—Matt. 12. 42.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

SHEBA was probably Yemen, the southern part of Arabia, near the mouth of the Red Sea, though some traditions have placed it in Abyssinia. We have in the biblical record (Gen. 10. 7, 28) two patriarchs named Sheba, one the son of Joktan, a Semite colonist of southern Arabia, and the other the son of Cush; and at least two nations were known to the Hebrews by the name. The Joktan or Arabian Sheba is mentioned as being not far from Ophir (compare last verse of the preceding chapter); we therefore identify Sheba, as above, with what is now known as Yemen. "This Arabian Sheba," writes *Dr. Rawlinson*, "was the great spice country of the ancient world (see verse 10); whereas Ethiopia furnished no spices. The Arabian Sheba was an important kingdom; Sheba in Ethiopia was a mere town, subject to Meroë. If Ophir be also placed in Arabia, then Solomon's trade with that place will account for his fame having reached the Sabæan princess." The ideal king of Psalm 72 receives gifts from "the kings of Sheba and Seba," and the suggestion may have come from the present passage, especially if the psalm was composed when another claimant had arisen for the title "Sheba." "The tribe," says *Dr. Hammond*, "would seem to have grown richer and stronger than all the other peoples by means of its commercial enterprise, and it was especially famed for its gold, gems, and spices (Ezek. 27. 22; Jer. 6. 20; Isa. 60. 6; Joel 3. 8; Job 6. 19; Psalm 72. 10)." Arab tradition gives to the Queen of Sheba the name of Balkis, but the Abyssinians call her Makeda. The kings of Abyssinia still claim descent from Solomon and Makeda, as they call her, but the African extraction of the queen is as mythical as is her union with Solomon.

LESSON HYMN.—

How lovely are thy dwellings, Lord, From noise and trouble free!
How beautiful the sweet accord Of souls that pray to thee!
Lord God of hosts that reign'st on high! They are the truly blest
Who only will on thee rely, In thee alone will rest.
They journey on from strength to strength, With joy and gladsome cheer,
Till all before our God at length In Zion's courts appear.—*Milton*.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (November 23), The Fame of Solomon, 1 Kings 10. 1-13. *Tuesday*, Excelling in greatness, 1 Kings 10. 14-23. *Wednesday*, Worldwide renown, 1 Kings 10. 24-29. *Thursday*, Unsatisfying, Eccles. 2. 1-11. *Friday*, Supremacy of God, Psalm 89. 1-8. *Saturday*, A greater than Solomon, Matt. 12. 38-42. *Sunday*, The glory of Christ, Rev. 1. 9-18.

Authorized Version.

1 And when the ¹ queen of She[']ba heard of the fame of Sol[']o-mon concerning the name of the LORD, she came ² to prove him with hard questions.

2 And she came to Je-ru[']sa-lem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and

Revised Version.

1 ¹ And when the queen of She[']ba heard of the fame of Sol[']o-mon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him

2 with hard questions. And she came to Je-ru[']sa-lem with a very great train, with

¹ 2 Chron. 9. 1, etc.; Matt. 12. 42; Luke 11. 31.—² See Judg. 14. 12; Prov. 1. 6.

¹ See 2 Chron. 9. 1, etc.

I. WHAT THE QUEEN HEARD. VÊRSÉS 1-3.

1. **When the queen of Sheba heard**—Solomon's court soon became the wonder of the world. His commercial expeditions by caravan and fleet spread his fame into all lands. **Concerning the name of the Lord**—This clause is confessedly obscure. *Keil* explains, "In other words, the fame which Solomon had acquired through the name of the Lord, or through the fact that the Lord so glorified himself in him." *Rawlinson* asks, "May it not mean what we should call his '*religious* fame,' as distinct from his artistic, literary, military, or political fame?" All Solomon's wealth and wisdom had a most notable relation to Jehovah's name, from whom he derived wisdom and in whose honor he builded the temple, which, of itself, made him famous. **She came**—It was probably a journey of more than one thousand two hundred miles, undertaken not for pleasure, nor gain, nor health, but to learn the truth concerning God; to satisfy the deepest longings of the heart. **To prove him with hard questions**—That is, with enigmas, a common and favorite method of testing one's sagacity and knowledge, both among the ancient and modern orientals. Beyond doubt many of these questions related to those moral subjects which we find treated in the Book of Proverbs. "The spirit of this asking of questions and solving of dark riddles is of the nature of Socratic wisdom itself."—*Stanley*. The term is probably inclusive, and might, for example, have described judicial problems, like that of 1 Kings 3. 16, *agg*. Thus it sometimes means parables (compare Ezek. 17. 2; Num. 12. 8; John 16. 29); sometimes maxims or epigrams, as Prov. 1. 6; Heb. 2. 6; sometimes poetic thought, as Psalm 49. 4; and sometimes riddles pure and simple, as Judg. 14. 12. The Book of Proverbs seems to contain much that would originally be given in answer to riddles, as we learn from traditional examples of these. The legends speak rather of subtleties, like those *Josephus* describes as propounded by Solomon to Hiram, an intellectual exercise especially popular with Arabs.

FEW PEOPLE REALLY SEEK WISDOM. The Queen of Sheba made her long and difficult journey to Solomon not so much to learn of him as to puzzle him, though so soon as she recognized the genuineness of his wisdom she humbly sat at his feet. In these later days many of the questions propounded, much of the advice asked for, have no higher motive than this queen started out with. The effort is not to know, but to be smart; not to teach, but to make points; not to learn, but to engage in a successful intellectual duel. The scribes and Pharisees who strove to "entangle" Jesus were of a piece with the Queen of Sheba, and with nine tenths of the men who are ready to exchange opinions with you. Beware of such, and imitate them not.

2. **She came to Jerusalem**, a distance of twelve hundred miles, "from the uttermost parts of the earth"—a marvelous undertaking in those days. The journey was made upon camels, and would require at least three months of wearisome travel, in a hot climate and over the dreariest of deserts. **With a very great train**—With all the stately retinue of a great queen. *Thénius* understands the words of a heavily armed escort, which would be needed, for the people whose countries she crossed are fond of other people's treasures. **Camels**—These "ships of the desert" are to this day the only means of transit to be depended upon in that region. The camel was a familiar object, but Jerusalem had never seen a caravan so long, so splendid, or so curious as this. **Spices**—Ancient writers, like *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, and *Strabo*, bear witness

Authorized Version.

very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Sol'o-mon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

3 And Sol'o-mon told her all her ^a questions:

Revised Version.

camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Sol'o-mon, she communed with him

3 of all that was in her heart. And Sol'o-

^a Heb. words.

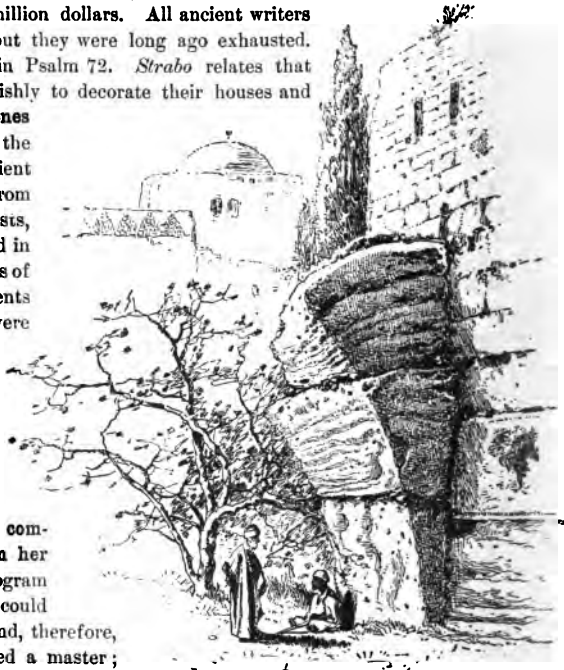
to the unmeasured abundance and variety of Arabian spices. The whole land of the Sabæans was said to be fragrant with frankincense, myrrh, opobalsam, gum tragacanth, and ladanum. And Yemen corresponds with the territory assigned by classical writers to the Sabæans, which is Sheba. **Very much gold**—According to verse 10, one hundred and twenty talents, or from two to three million dollars. All ancient writers speak of the gold mines of Arabia, but they were long ago exhausted. The gold of "Sheba" is celebrated in Psalm 72. *Strabo* relates that the Sabæans used gold and silver lavishly to decorate their houses and furniture. The chief **precious stones** which Arabia now yields are the onyx, the emerald, and the turquoise. In ancient times pearls were readily procurable from the Persian Gulf fishery, and amethysts, sardonyxes, and other gems were found in the Arabian deserts. All these products of the queen's own land were for presents to King Solomon (verse 10), and were thoroughly Arabian presents, certainly not African. An ordinary visit in common life can hardly be paid in the Orient without making presents (compare 1 Sam. 9. 7); and the visit of one sovereign to another would of course mean exceptional magnificence in the interchange of gifts. **She communed with him of all that was in her heart**—Eagerly following out the program of her desires. "She knew that she could not every day meet with a Solomon, and, therefore, she makes her best use of so learned a master; now she empties her heart of all her doubts, and fills it with instruction."—*Bishop Hall*.

CONTRAST THE QUEEN OF SHEBA WITH OURSELVES. She "came from the uttermost parts of the earth," sparing no trouble or expense. We have no such journey to take. The "greater than Solomon" is *here*, accessible at any moment, and that "without money and without price." She came *uninvited*, and yet was welcome; we are invited, yea, besought to come.

Illustration 253. A Japanese nobleman found a leaf of the English New Testament, and sent his servant three hundred miles to get it translated, and then sent to China for a Bible that he might learn about God.

Illustration 254. A Chinese peasant who received a tract walked two hundred and fifty miles to the mission at Peking to receive instruction in the Gospel.

3. Solomon told her—He showed the greatness of his genius or the fullness of his inspiration by the clearness with which he solved her questions. It is useless to inquire what



ROBINSON'S ARCH—REMAINS OF AN ANCIENT BRIDGE, OR "ASCENT," FROM ZION TO THE SOUTH PORCH OF THE TEMPLE.

Authorized Version.

there was not *any* thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

4 And when the queen of She'ba had seen all Sol'o-mon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the ^battendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his ^ccou-

^b Heb. *standing*.—^c Or, *butlers*.

Revised Version.

mon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king which he 4 told her not. And when the queen of She'ba had seen all the wisdom of Sol'o-

5 mon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the ^aattendance of his min-

^a Heb. *standing*.

her questions were. That they included riddles such as the ancient orientals delighted in we may regard as certain; and such riddles often contained important political and religious questions; doubtless, also, there were questions of simple curiosity. **There was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not**—The Hebrew reads, "Solomon told her all her words; there was not a word hid from the king that he told her not." The visit seems to have lasted long, and to have won from the queen the profoundest respect and admiration. Oriental legend says that it won her love also, and that that love was heartily reciprocated by the Hebrew monarch, who, according to the Ethiopians, became by her the father of the line of Abyssinian kings, but, according to the Arab legend, the ancestor of the kings of Yemen. There is hardly any end to the legends concerning the Queen of Sheba's visit with which the Orient teems. But most of them are silly to the utmost degree. She dressed five hundred boys and five hundred girls alike, and asked Solomon, by his prophetic power, to distinguish them. The king asked them all to wash their hands; and those who just dipped their hands in the water he classified as boys, while those who tucked their sleeves up to their elbows and washed their arms also he decided were girls. And he made no mistake. Another version is that he threw a ball at each one. Each boy held his hands and caught it as boys usually catch flying balls, but each girl caught it in her lap. Many other tests quite as useless are described at length. On the death of the queen the genii in the service of Solomon carried her body, by his orders, to Tadmor in the wilderness, where her grave is still concealed beneath the ruins of Palmyra.

ON THE ASKING OF QUESTIONS. The spirit of this asking of questions and solving of dark riddles is of the very nature of true philosophy. "To ask questions rightly," said *Lord Bacon*, "is the half of knowledge." "Life without cross-examination is not life at all," said *Socrates*. Of this stimulating process, of this eager inquiry, of this solicitation of new meanings out of old words, Solomon is the first example. "When we inquire," says *Dean Stanley*, "when we restlessly question in our search after truth, when we seek it in unexpected quarters, we are but following in the steps of the wise Queen of Sheba."

II. WHAT THE QUEEN SAW. VERSES 4, 5.

4. **When the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom**—"His consummate skill to solve riddles," the light thrown by his vast knowledge upon all difficult questions, the statesmanship displayed in the government of his vast empire. **The house that he had built**—His royal palace, described in 1 Kings 7. 1-12, doubtless the most magnificent residence then in the world. It was thirteen years in building. It stood probably at the southeast corner of the modern Haram area. Here *Captain Warren's* excavations have revealed walls as ancient as the time of Solomon. *Josephus* says that the queen was especially astonished at the "house of the forest of Lebanon."

5. **The meat of his table**—The food consumed by the court and the system of purveyorships extending throughout the empire. All this we are told in 1 Kings 4. 22-28. The prestige of the oriental sovereign depended very largely on the size and magnificence of his court.

The sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers—Better, "the seat of his

Authorized Version.

bearers,² and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

² 1 Chron. 26. 16.

Revised Version.

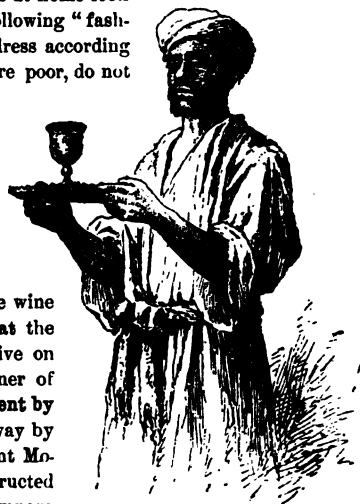
isters, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and ³his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no

³ Or, his burnt offering which he offered in, etc.

retainers and the standing of his servants." That is, not only the places in the palace assigned to the nobility and the servants of the king (*Keil*), but the magnificence of the entire arrangement of the court, including, doubtless, the position of the officers and their apparel. Very likely some of these royal servants were lodged in a style of wealth and luxury which would make the Queen of Sheba's proudest palatial arrangements at home look shabby. **Their apparel**—Orientals are not so foolish in following "fashion" as are Europeans and Americans. Men and women dress according to their position in life, and poor people, so long as they are poor, do not assume the apparel of the wealthy. But the rich, and especially those who are attached to the royal courts, wear gorgeous raiment. Their dress is sometimes furnished by the king. See Gen. 41. 42; 2 Kings 5. 5; Dan. 5. 7; Esther 6. 8; 1 Macc. 10. 20. Doubtless these retainers of Solomon were robed in a manner to correspond with their position at a court so magnificent as to have won lasting renown among oriental nations. **His cupbearers**—

His butlers, who had, among other duties, charge of all the wine drunk at the royal table, and who usually at feasts stood at the king's side. The sketch of the cupbearer which we give on this page was drawn from life, but illustrates the manner of service much better than the splendor of apparel. **His ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord**—The stairway by which the king went from his palace on the side of Mount Moriah to the temple on its summit. It was evidently constructed with magnificence, but no description of it is left us. Compare 2 Kings 16. 18; 1 Chron. 26. 16. But the Septuagint has "burnt offering" in both places, and *Josephus* supports this reading, which seems inherently more probable. It only involves the omission in Chronicles of the tiny letter *y* (the "jot" of Matt. 5. 18). Since the fame of the temple had helped to bring her to Jerusalem (verse 1), it would be strange to omit reference to those splendid functions of worship so calculated to impress a foreigner. The queen may well have wondered at the manner of offering sacrifices at the great brazen altar in the temple court, and also at the number of burnt offerings there offered to God. **There was no more spirit in her**—Literally, "no more breath." She was breathless with amazement. Overawed by the unapproachable grandeur of Solomon's manner and estate, her queenly pride broke down. She had heard of Solomon, had applied her tests, and he had shown her more than she had dreamed of. A greater than Solomon has said to us, "Try Me and see."

THE MATERIAL ALWAYS MAKES THE DEEPEST IMPRESSION on superficial minds. After all, to the Queen of Sheba "the glory of Solomon" seems to have arranged itself in a sort of anticlimax. His wisdom must be great since she could not puzzle him; the house that he had built was greater; that was surpassed by his magnificent table service; that by the apparel of his servants; that by the splendor of his court. When she saw the magnificence of this richest of monarchs put in processional display she fainted. His wisdom had made her long to ask him riddles, but the rich livery of his servants made her say in humility, "The half of thy wisdom was never told." There are plenty of queens of Sheba now.



A CUPBEARER.

Authorized Version.

6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

d Heb. word.—e Or, sayings.—f Heb. thou hast added wisdom and goodness to the fame.—g Prov. 8. 34.

Revised Version.

6 more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy

7 wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the

8 fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear

h Or, sayings.—i Heb. thou hast added wisdom and goodness to the fame.

III. WHAT THE QUEEN SAID. VERSES 6-9.

6. **She said to the king**—In her way, I think the Queen of Sheba was as remarkable as was Solomon himself. He was wiser than all men (and women); she was franker than all women (and men). Most of the people that we know (perhaps including ourselves), if they had recognized how far the success of a rival surpassed their own, would have been tempted either to hold their tongues or to whisper a few discounting facts. **It was a true report**—"Explorers and mariners spin many strange yarns, but when they talked about you, O Solomon, they did not exaggerate."

7. **I believed not**—This was frank. The queen's speech is full of the language of compliment, yet bears the marks of the profoundest sincerity. We are nowhere told the precise terms of the reports which had reached her ears, but she evidently believed them to be greatly exaggerated until she came and had seen for herself. On the contrary, her experience showed her that the half was not told her; that the reality far exceeded all that she had heard. If, as we suppose, questions relating to religious and moral life, the highest of all wisdom, were talked of between this pious king and heathen queen, and the truths of which the Book of Proverbs is full were given her, she surely heard many wonderful things of which she had never before dreamed. How many have heard about the religion of Jesus, who, like this queen, on putting it to the test, have exclaimed, "The half was not told us!" **Prosperity**—Goodness.

THE HALF WAS NOT TOLD. This expression has become a proverb in many languages. "Usually things are represented to us, both by common fame and by our own imagination, much greater than we find them when we come to examine them; but here the truth exceeded both fame and fancy. Those who, through grace, are brought to experience the delights of communion with God will say that the one half was not told them of the pleasures of wisdom's ways and the advantages of her gates. Glorified saints, much more, will say that it was a true report which they hear of the happiness of heaven, but that the thousandth part was not told them (1 Cor. 2. 9)."—*M. Henry.*

Illustration 255. "Solomon's great privileges laid upon him great obligations, and therefore it was, when he fell, that his sin was so heinous. We have not his gifts, but have we not others far greater in many ways? What then? I send two boys on two errands, giving the one ten dollars and the other one wherewith to execute my commission. When they return shall I make them both account for the same sum? No, for to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12. 48)."—*E. Stock.*

8. **Happy**—"O the happinesses of," as elsewhere. She thought it a great privilege for Solomon's companions, who were from their position brought frequently into connection with him, to enjoy such association. Intercourse with such a character is ennobling. It is a great blessing to live in a Christian family. It is a great blessing to be associated with Christian ministers and Christian people, and to hear them; but a still greater one to have Jesus with us and to hear his voice. **Thy men**—The Septuagint, supported by two other ver-

Authorized Version.

9 ⁵ Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Is⁵ra-el: because the LORD loved Is⁵ra-el forever, therefore made he thee king, ⁶ to do judgment and justice.

10 And she ⁷ gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great

Revised Version.

9 thy wisdom. Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Is⁵ra-el: because the LORD loved Is⁵ra-el forever, therefore made he thee

10 king, to do judgment and justice. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty

⁵ Chap. 5. 7. — ⁶ 2 Sam. 8. 15; Psalm 72. 2; Prov. 8. 15. —
⁷ Psalm 72. 10, 15.

sions, reads "thy wives," both here and in Chronicles, an initial *aleph* being dropped. Our text seems rather tautologous, and the Septuagint is probably right. The polygamy thus referred to had not reached the aggravated stage described in the next chapter; we are not to think of "seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines;" the queen could hardly have congratulated the members of that vast loveless harem.

WISDOM IS BEYOND RUBIES. Not knowledge, but wisdom. The queen made a big blunder when she uttered the words contained in the eighth verse. Men who continually hear wisdom are not necessarily any happier than other men. The advantage is in *practice*. He who knows two things, and takes advantage of his knowledge, is a happier man, more prosperous, more noble, than he who knows five thousand, but does not mold his ideas and life by his knowledge.

9. **Blessed be the Lord**—The queen recognized that it was from Solomon's God that his wisdom and his prosperity came. While we are not to infer her conversion to the Israelite faith (for we read of no gifts or offerings in the temple), we cannot doubt that she went home with new and enlarged views of God. Compare 1 Kings 5. 7. In neither case did these heathen sovereigns show any intention to relinquish their own national deities. According to oriental ideas, each people had a god of its own, just as much as it had a king. Tradition, of course, asserts that she was converted to Judaism, and carried its religion back to her own country; but, however pleasant it would be so to believe, the evidence is not sufficient. **Forever**—Chronicles and the Septuagint read "to establish them forever," which is almost certainly right. The reading of the text, striking in itself and recalling such gems of Old Testament religion as Jer. 31. 3, does not suit the context so well. **Judgment**—The physical vindication of wrongs. **Justice**—The principle of justice in governing.

Illustration 256. "The Queen of Sheba is cited by our Lord as one whose example is worth following (Matt. 12. 42). I fear there are but few potentates in these days who would do as she did. The monarchs from afar who have visited America have done so either in search of earthly wisdom and earthly advantages or to gratify earthly curiosity. But I have heard of two poor boys, Zulus from South Africa, who left their home, made their way to the coast, took service on board a vessel, and came to England, that they might learn about God, and who went through many hardships and disappointments before they found friends to gratify their desire. But I think they would tell us they found more than they sought. The young people round about us have no need to take a toilsome journey. There are pastors, churches, teachers, and Bible close at hand. But what do they seek at church? An hour's pastime, the enjoyment of music, eloquent and clever preaching—or heavenly wisdom? What brings them to the class? Is it the attraction of a friendly teacher, or pleasant companions, or a lively and interesting lesson? And what do they seek in their Bibles? Pathetic tales, thrilling narrative, curious and remarkable facts, ancient history, fine poetry, etc.? Of the church, the class, and how much more of the Bible, it may be said: 'A greater than Solomon is here.' If the Queen of Sheba had seen all the wonders of Jerusalem, but had never been near the king nor heard his wisdom, she would have missed the best, the chief thing of all. And whatever we may see and hear and learn, if we miss Christ, we have missed the only thing that can save, the only thing that can satisfy."—S. G. Stock.

IV. WHAT THE QUEEN GAVE. VERSE 10.

10. Compare Psalm 72. 10, no doubt a reference to this. **She gave**—Gifts are very frequent things in the East as tokens of friendship and regard. To refuse a gift is interpreted as evidence of enmity. **A hundred and twenty talents**—Over three million dollars, exactly

Authorized Version.

store, and precious stones : there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of She'ba gave to king Sol'o-mon.

Revised Version.

talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones : there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of She'ba gave to king Sol'o-mon.

the same amount as Hiram had presented to Solomon (1 Kings 9. 14). *Josephus*, however, only makes it one sixth as much. The difficulties in the way of understanding ancient Hebrew numbers are many. **Spices**—*Josephus* says that the balsam tree came into Palestine among her gifts. See note above. The "immense abundance of spices in Arabia is noted by many ancient writers. *Herodotus* says that the whole tract exhaled an odor marvelously sweet. *Diodorus* relates that the odor was carried out to sea to a considerable distance from the shore. According to *Strabo* the spice trade of Arabia had made the Sabæans (citizens of Sheba) enormously wealthy." —*Rawlinson*. Besides the spices produced in their own country, the Arabs dealt in cinnamon and other articles of luxury which must have been imported from India and the farther East.

LESSONS. 1. We have heard of Jesus, the true King of Israel, his wisdom, power, and glory, and it is for us everyone to know in our own experience how great and good he is, and how precious is his love (John 7. 17, 46; 9. 25; Phil. 3. 7, 8; 1 Peter 2. 7; 1 John 5. 10). 2. We ought to bring our fullest homage to Jesus our King. He is greater than Solomon, and more worthy. Had this queen known of him as we do, would she not have taken him for her Lord? If she took so great pains to know and honor Solomon, shall we not be equally earnest to know and honor Jesus by giving him our hearts? (John 4. 29; Acts 5. 31; Phil. 2. 10. Col. 2. 9; Rev. 5. 9; 22. 14.)

THREE FACTS ABOUT THE QUEEN.

There are three points about the Queen of Sheba, in conclusion, to be specially emphasized—two likenesses and a contrast.

1. SHE SAW AND HEARD AT THE COURT OF SOLOMON FAR MORE THAN SHE HAD EVER DREAMED OF. So it is with those who come to the great King. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Cor. 2. 9, 10).

2. SHE WAS FULLY SATISFIED. All her "hard questions" were resolved. Solomon "told her all that was in her heart," and gave her "whatever she desired, besides that which he gave her of his royal bounty." And what did others say of the great King? "He told me all things that ever I did" (John 4. 29); "Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6. 68); and of those who come to him, "All things are yours" (1 Cor. 3. 21). Christ does fully satisfy.

3. SHE RETURNED AND WENT TO HER "OWN LAND." Here is a contrast. Those who come to Christ come forever. His home is theirs. "They shall go no more out" (Rev. 3. 12).—*S. G. S.*

THE VISIT TO THE KING.

I came from very far away, to see The King of Salem : for I had been told
Of glory and of wisdom manifold, And condescension infinite and free.
How could I rest when I had heard his fame In that dark lonely land of death from whence I came?

I came, but (not like Sheba's queen) alone! No stately train, no costly gifts to bring:
No friend at court, save One, that One the King. I had requests to spread before his throne,
And I had questions none could solve for me, Of import deep, and full of awful mystery.

I came and communed with that mighty King, And told him all my heart; I cannot say
In mortal ear what communings were they. But wouldst thou know, go too, and meekly bring
All that is in thy heart, and thou shalt hear His voice of love and power, his answers sweet and clear.

O, happy end of every weary quest! He told me all I needed, graciously—
Enough for guidance and for victory O'er doubts and fears, enough for quiet rest;
And when some veiled response I could not read, It was not hid from him—this was enough indeed.

His wisdom and his glories passed before My wondering eyes in gradual revelation ;
The house that he had built, its strong foundation, Its living stones, and, brightening more and more,
Fair glimpses of that palace far away, Where all his loyal ones shall dwell with him for aye.

True the report that reached my far-off land Of all his wisdom and transcendent fame :
Yet I believed not until I came—Bowed to the dust, till raised by royal hand.
The half was never told by mortal word : My King exceeded all the fame that I had heard !

O, happy are his servants ! happy they Who stand continually before his face,
Ready to do his will of wisest grace ! My King ! there is such blessedness to-day ?
For I, too, hear thy wisdom ; line by line Thy ever-brightening words in holy radiance shine.

O, blessed be the Lord thy God, who set our King upon his throne ! divine delight
In the Beloved, crowning thee with might, Honor, and majesty supreme ; and yet
The strange and godlike secret opening thus—The kingship of his Christ ordained through love to us.

—F. R. Havergal.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The Queen of Sheba is a representative of **The Truth-seeker**, and an example to us under the Gospel, as is hinted in the **GOLDEN TEXT**.

I. Note that it was **spiritual truth** which she sought. It was concerning the name of the Lord (verse 1) ; the knowledge of God, most precious in all the world. Not all truth is of equal value ; but the truth of God is the highest.

II. Note her **interest** in spiritual truth. Verse 1. Far away, in a heathen land, remote from the temple and the knowledge of Jehovah, she had pondered these questions, and was eager to learn of God. The noblest spirits are those that aspire after the highest knowledge.

III. Note her **diligence** in seeking the truth. Verses 1, 2. She took a journey of more than a thousand miles, at great expense, leaving her kingdom, that she might learn concerning the name of the Lord. The price that one pays for knowledge shows its estimation.

IV. Note her **humility**, the candor with which she told him of "all that was in her heart." Verse 2. He that would learn must confess his ignorance, and must receive the truth in the humble, teachable spirit. Let us conceal nothing when we come to the King.

V. Note her full **acknowledgment** of the truth. Verses 6, 7. She was not ashamed to own the benefit which she had received, and to confess it openly. Let those who have found the true wisdom be prompt to make their confession of it.

VI. Note the **generosity** with which she repaid the gift of the truth. Verse 10. Having reaped spiritual things, she gave her carnal gifts, making a wise use of her wealth. Who shall say that she did not receive more than she gave ?

"THE HALF WAS NOT TOLD ME !"

SOLOMON

WAS MAGNIFICENT,	WAS GENEROUS,
WAS COURTEOUS,	WAS WISE.

CHRIST

IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY,	DIED FOR ME,
LOVES ME,	SAVES MY SOUL.

"A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE !"

LESSON X.—DECEMBER 6.

SOLOMON'S SIN.—1 KINGS 11. 4-13.

[Read 1 Kings 11. 1-48.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.—
1 Cor. 10. 12.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

THE FALL OF SOLOMON, like that of David, "is completely passed over by the Chronicler, whose compilation was made at a time when the national religion had entered on the final stage which we associate with the name of Judaism—earnest to bigotry, passionately devoted to the externals of the ancestral faith, and idolizing the heroes of the past with a blindness which resolved to forget their faults. The inspiration of the Book of Chronicles came through priestly channels: 'there is no more any prophet.' The annals of the kings show the breadth of view characteristic of the prophetic order. Solomon and his far greater sire were men, and like men they fell, that the people of God might realize that for them alone, of all the nations, the Golden Age was in the future, when a king should rule in righteousness, endowed with David's tenderness and Solomon's wisdom, but free from all that made them but broken lights of him."—*Moulton*.

LESSON HYMN.—

How oft this wretched heart Has wandered from the Lord!
How oft my roving thoughts depart, Forgetful of his word!
Yet mercy calls, "Return;" Saviour, to thee I come:
My vile ingratitude I mourn; O take the wanderer home.
Thy love so free, so sweet, Blest Saviour, I adore;
O keep me at thy sacred feet, And let me rove no more.—*Anne Steele*.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (November 30), Solomon's Sin, 1 Kings 11. 4-13. *Tuesday* (December 1), Ahijah's prophecy, 1 Kings 11. 29-38. *Wednesday*, Wise counsel forsaken, 1 Kings 12. 1-11. *Thursday*, The kingdom divided, 1 Kings 12. 12-20. *Friday*, Danger of evil companionship, Deut. 7. 1-11. *Saturday*, Resisting warning, Jer. 44. 1-11. *Sunday*, Idols of the heart, Ezek. 14. 1-8.

Authorized Version.

4 For it came to pass, when Sol'o-mon was old, ¹that his wives turned away his heart after

Revised Version.

4 For it came to pass, when Sol'o-mon was old, that his wives turned away his heart

¹ Deut. 17. 17; Neh. 13. 26.

I. THE KING'S FOLLY. VERSES 4-8.

4. Solomon's disposition to polygamy was encouraged by political considerations. A monarch so fond of pomp would be strongly tempted to surpass his neighbors in the size of his harem, while the alliance with so many royal houses was a bond of friendship with nations around. The numbers given, though certainly astonishing, are supported by *Josephus* and the Septuagint, and paralleled in the annals of the East. **When Solomon was old**—When his youth had fled. He died at about sixty. He was about twenty at his accession, and hardly more than forty when the temple was finished. Probably in less than ten years his "strange wives" succeeded in undermining the weakened resolution of a man old before his time. **His wives**—The few favorites, probably; for the majority of the immense harem could hardly ever see the king. He had in his seraglio a rare collection of idolaters—Egyptian, Moabite, Ammonite,

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
other gods: and his ³ heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, ³ as was the heart of Da'vid his father.	after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the
5 For Sol'o-mon went after ⁴ Ash'to-reth the goddess of: the Zi-do'ni-ans, and after ^a Mil'-com the abomination of the Am'mon-ites.	5 heart of Da'vid his father. For Sol'o-mon went after Ash'to-reth the goddess of the Zi-do'ni-ans, and after Mil'com the abom-

³ Chap. 8. 61. — ³ Chap. 9. 4. — ⁴ Ver. 33; Judg. 2. 13; 2 Kings 23. 13. — ^a Molech, ver. 7.

Edomite, Phœnician, and Canaanite wives and concubines. **Turned away his heart**—"Made him indifferent toward the strictness and exclusiveness of the religion of Jehovah, and more indulgent toward the worship of other gods."—*Bähr*. **Other gods**—Than Jehovah. **Perfect**—See 1 Kings 8. 61 (Lesson VI). Solomon's sin was not abandoning or persecuting Jehovah's worship; no doubt the temple services were carried on with unchanging splendor. But Jehovah will be all in all or nothing, and Solomon's worship was worse than thrown away. **The heart of David**—David was guilty of deplorable sins, but his profound penitence and humiliation, his confession and cry to Jehovah, led to his pardon and restoration, and up to the last he maintained his loyalty and devotion to his God.

Illustration 257. "There is an old legend known to most German readers through the poem of Uhland, and to English and American readers through Longfellow's translation, which relates how the fortunes of the house of Edenhall were indissolubly bound up with a crystal goblet, which had been handed down from father to son as the most precious possession of the family. The poet tells how the young lord of Edenhall, in an hour of festivity and elation, called for this goblet, known by the name of 'the Luck of Edenhall,' and after drinking from it, put its strength to the proof by dashing it on the ground. The precious goblet was shivered to pieces. And at that same hour the enemy broke into the castle, slew the young lord, and laid his heritage in ruins. And just as the good fortune of Edenhall was bound up with this goblet, so is the prosperity and safety of every one of us bound up with something equally precious and frail. What is this? 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' 'Out of it are the issues of life,' there is its preciousness; 'Keep it with all diligence,' this reveals its frailty. We shall see both of these illustrated in the sad story of Solomon's fall."—*S. G. Stock*.

Illustration 258. There is an oriental legend that in Solomon's staff, on which he leaned, was a worm gnawing secretly, so that the rod at last fell asunder. Such was Solomon's character.

Illustration 259. So in the timbers of a great ship there may be a dry rot which corrodes and destroys them, until suddenly in a storm the vessel breaks up and founders.

Illustration 260. Idolatry in its last analysis is the devotion of our hearts to something else than God. Whether Astarte, or Chemosh, or Molech, or gold, or a United States senatorship, or a new bonnet, or the success of a ball game, be the object of our absorbing desires, the idolatry is equally sinful. The gathering together of the good things of this life leads toward idolatry of heart (Mark 10. 24).

5. Went after—*Canon Rawlinson* claims that this expression, which is common in the Pentateuch, always means actual idolatry. But it is, perhaps, better to understand that, while himself constant in his worship of Jehovah as the national God, he gave the full weight of his imperial patronage to the gods of his heathen wives. **Ashtoreth**—No commentary could compare in vividness, and hardly even in accuracy, with the magnificent passage in "Paradise Lost" describing the fallen angels, who, according to mediæval belief (compare Psalm 106. 37), animated these idols of Canaan. This mainly applies to those of this passage; the poet's fancy produced his own Mammon, Belial, and Beelzebub. Ashtoreth (Astarte) was the female sex deified, and was specially adored by women. She was the moon goddess, known in other regions and years as Aphrodite and Venus. Her form was variously represented, sometimes as that of a woman with the head of a bull, sometimes as a fish. She was described as being a lover of physical beauty, intense, vindictive, and obscene. The rites of her worship were magnificent and voluptuous to the last degree. **The goddess of the Zidonians**—The Septuagint omits verse 5, and adds "Astarte the abomination of the Zidonians" to verse 7. "Zidon," like "Tyre," was sometimes used as a generic name for Phœnicia, of which each was in turn the metropolis. The worship of Astarte, together with that of Baal, the male divinity of the Phœni-

Authorized Version.

6 And Sol'o-mon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and ^bwent not fully after the LORD, as *did* Da'vid his father.

7 ^cThen did Sol'o-mon build a high place for 'Che'mosh, the abomination of Mo'ab, in

Revised Version.

6 ination of the Am'mon-ites. And Sol'o-mon did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the

7 LORD, as *did* Da'vid his father. Then did Sol'o-mon build an high place for Che'mosh

^b Heb. fulfilled not after, Num. 14. 24.—^c Num. 33. 52.—
^d Num. 21. 29; Judg. 11. 24.

cians, was in later years transplanted to Carthage, where it greatly flourished. **Milcom**, also **Molech** (verse 7), and **Malcham** (Zeph. 1. 5), all being varieties of the word for "king." **The abomination**—That is, the sin which, among this people, was peculiarly hateful to the true God. **The Ammonites**—A people conquered by David, on the border of the Syrian desert, east and north of the Moabites. Those who would realize the horror of these heathen cults—and it is worth while to try if we would understand the isolation divinely appointed for Israel—will find Molech's worship most vividly presented in *Dr. Hubert Parry's* magnificent oratorio "Judith." He was the god of fire, and the lives of youths and maidens were sacrificed to him. A huge human form (sometimes with the crowned head of a calf), made of brass and seated on a brazen throne, fronted the worshipers. Throne and image were both hollow, and a furious fire was kindled within. The children were placed in its arms, which soon became red hot, and they slipped into the flames below. *Milton's* grim description needs modifying only in his reference to "drums and timbrels loud," which were imported into the traditions from a probably false popular etymology of "Tophet," a name of the valley of Hinnom, where the children were sacrificed to the ghastly idol.

6. **Did evil**—This is the standing expression for disloyalty to Jehovah. Compare 1 Kings 15. 25, 26, 34; 16. 25, 30; 2 Kings 3. 2; 18. 2; 21. 2. **Went not fully after**—While formally following Jehovah. Compare Josh. 14. 8; Num. 14. 24. "The essence of Solomon's sin was that, having permitted himself, for purposes of state and pride and ostentation, the love of many strange women, he permitted them, and possibly some of his subjects also, to worship their false gods. And by so doing *he gave a direct sanction to superstition.*"—*Pulpit Commentary*. **As did David his father**—"David's sin was more directly against man, indirectly against God. But the sin of Solomon was against God directly."—*MacDonald*. How could Solomon have been led into this evil? "The long peace, broken neither by war nor other calamity, the great wealth, the extensive trade, the abundance, by these means, of all objects of luxury possible, the voluptuous court life in consequence—everything conspired to bring about a relaxation; and this was the soil upon which the numerous strange women could carry out their nature without hindrance."—*Bähr*.

Illustration 261. "Standing at the base of a cliff, you may sometimes see lying close to you a rocky mass imbedded in the sand, which evidently has not been there always. Once it crowned the heights above, looking firm and unassailable, but its supports have given way, and here it lies far below. You can see there has been a fall. I remember seeing an old man earning his living by errands and odd jobs, who had once been the head of a large business, with many men employed under him. It was a great change of position. Here, too, had been a fall, owing, I believe, merely to circumstances, and not to any fault on the part of the man himself. But we may see, occasionally, much deeper falls. Men and women who once held a great position in society are sometimes found in the haunts of beggary and misery. And it is usually some moral fall which has led to this. When a young man, who once walked among the servants of God, is found in careless, worldly, ungodly company, the fall has begun. There is no deeper descent than from the house of God to the 'tents of wickedness.'"—*S. G. Stock*.

7. **Then did Solomon build a high place**—Worship in high places has been the rule when there was no house of God yet builded (1 Kings 3. 2). It was a common superstition that hill-tops were nearer heaven than other places, and therefore more suitable for worship. The term "high place" came to be used of all places of worship, and is here synonymous with *temple and altar*. **Chemosh**—Worshiped also by the Ammonites (Judg. 11. 24). He was the sun

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
<p>7 the hill that is before Je-ru'sa-lem, and for Mo'lech, the abomination of the children of Am'mon.</p> <p>8 And likewise did he for 8 all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.</p> <p>9 And the LORD was angry with Sol'o-mon, because 9 his heart was turned from the LORD (God of Is'ra-el, 10 which had appeared unto him twice.</p> <p>10 And 11 had commanded him concerning</p>	<p>the abomination of Mo'ab, in the mount that is before Je-ru'sa-lem, and for Mo'lech the abomination of the children of 8 Am'mon. And so did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.</p> <p>9 And the LORD was angry with Sol'o-mon, because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el, which had 10 appeared unto him twice, and had com-</p>

7 9 Kings 23. 13. — 8 Ezek. 16. 22, 29; Hos. 4. 11, 12; 1 Cor. 10. 11, 12. — 9 Vers. 2, 3. — 10 Chaps. 2. 5; 9. 2. — 11 Chaps. 6. 12; 9. 6.

god—"a god of war, depicted upon coins with a sword, lance, and shield in his hands, and with two torches by his side."—*Keil*. He was widely worshiped in western Asia. His name occurs repeatedly on the "Moabite Stone." Carchemish, "the fort of Chemosh," a great city of the northern Hittites, must have been under his protection. In Babylon he seems to have been known as Chemosh-Bel. Of his worship we know little, but that it was occasionally attended by human sacrifices. The popular conception of him seems to have been near akin to that of Baal, the Phœnician deification of the male sex. **The abomination**—See verse 5. **Moab**—A people living east of the Dead Sea, and, like Ammon, descended from Lot and his daughters. **The hill that is before Jerusalem**—The Mount of Olives, of which the southern flank was called "The Mount of Corruption," as the supposed seat of this foul worship. A more precise account of the location of these temples is given in 2 Kings 23. 13.

8. Likewise did he for all—He made no discrimination in favor of one as against another. Probably most of his strange (foreign) wives were worshippers of one or another of the deities named above, and in erecting altars to Ashtoreth, Molech, and Chemosh he provided for the women of other foreign nations besides Zidonians, Ammonites, and Moabites. Pharaoh's daughter had not asked for a temple, and probably worshiped Jehovah. **Which burnt incense**—The burning of incense, compounded of various aromatic spices, and giving forth a fragrant perfume, formed a part of the religious worship of most ancient nations, and seems to have been the symbol of prayer and worship acceptable to God.

SIN'S FIRST APPROACHES ARE PLAUSIBLE. Even idolatry is not loathsome in its earliest appeals to the human heart. We look from the outer standpoint on the miserable little brass and stone images that the Hindus worship, and we wonder how their hearts' loyalty can ever be turned to such ugly creatures. But that is only the outcome. If we had proceeded step by step from the heathen Hindu's standpoint, we should have come out at the Hindu's goal. We look with horror at the bloated face of the drunkard; it is wonderful that anyone will drink the vile stuff that produces such results. But if we start from the drunkard's standpoint, enticed by a few sips of spiced wine, and gradually increase the dose as the unnatural desire increases within us, we shall eventually reach the drunkard's degradation.

II. THE LORD'S ANGER. VERSES 9-13.

9. The Lord was angry—As the Lord always is against sin. There is a deep and eternal antagonism of holiness to iniquity. **The Lord God of Israel**—The true meaning requires us here (especially) to read JEHOVAH, the God of Israel; in contrast with Ashtoreth, the goddess of Zidon; Molech, the god of Ammon; and Chemosh, the god of Moab. **Appeared unto him twice**—At Gibeon and at Jerusalem, as described in 1 Kings 3. 5, and 9. 2. This last and tremendous warning suggests that he was already in danger; so high a privilege was now forfeited. The message of verse 11 was clearly given by a prophet.

10. Had commanded him—As, for example, in chap. 9, at the second appearance, when

Authorized Version.

this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded.

11 Wherefore the Lord said unto Sol'o-mon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, ¹² I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for Da'vid thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

13 ¹³ Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give ¹⁴ one tribe to thy son for Da'vid my servant's sake, and for Je-ru-sa-lem's sake ¹⁵ which I have chosen.

Revised Version.

manded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded.

11 Wherefore the Lord said unto Sol'o-mon, Forasmuch as this ¹ is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwith-

12 standing in thy days I will not do it, for Da'vid thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I

13 will not rend away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for Da'vid my servant's sake, and for Je-ru-sa-lem's sake which I have chosen.

¹ Heb. *is with thee*.—¹² Ver. 31; chap. 19. 15, 16.—¹³ 2 Sam. 7. 15; Psalm 89. 33.—¹⁴ Chap. 15. 20.—¹⁵ Deut. 12. 11.

¹ Heb. *is with thee*.

he warned him and the other people against going after other gods. See 1 Kings 6. 12; 9. 6-9. "God keeps account of the gracious visits he makes us, whether we do or not; knows how often he has appeared to us and for us."—*Matthew Henry*.

11. **The Lord said unto Solomon**—In what manner we are not told, but very probably by the ministry of the prophet Ahijah, the Shilonite, who is mentioned in the twenty-ninth verse of this chapter. **Thou hast not kept my covenant**—How Jehovah kept the covenant he had deigned to make, all Solomon's history showed. **I will . . . rend the kingdom from thee**—Compare verse 30, also 1 Sam. 15. 28, which reminds us that "stubbornness is as idolatry," disobedient Saul as idol-worshipping Solomon. **Thy servant**—That is, to one of thy subjects; Jeroboam, son of Nebat, who is introduced as one of Solomon's adversaries in verse 26 of this chapter, and who subsequently headed the revolt of the ten tribes. Jeroboam's enthronement made possible all the other rebellions which we have just noted.

Illustration 263. Hercules is said to have died from wearing a poisoned robe given him by one who pretended to be his friend. So the Church is often ruined by wearing the garments offered it by the world.

12. Compare 1 Kings 21. 29. This divine forbearance to an erring son for the sake of a righteous father is hardly (as *Lumby* says) "promised in the second commandment," which seems rather to promise a blessing for others' sake in Gen. 18. 26, etc.; Exod. 33. 17; Mark 2. 5.

13. **Not . . . all the kingdom**—It is not to be a revolution, but a secession, a revolt of ten tribes to form a rival kingdom of Israel. **One tribe to thy son**—Namely, that of Judah; and it became the kingdom of Judah. Although the tribe of Benjamin adhered to Judah (see 1 Kings 12. 21), and many individuals out of other tribes (see 2 Chron. 11. 13-17) came and strengthened the house of Judah, yet they all soon became so absorbed in the one powerful monarchy that they lost their tribal distinctness. Jerusalem belonged to both tribes. **For David my servant's . . . and for Jerusalem's sake**—These are to be closely connected. The line of David, the chosen king, should ever reign in Jerusalem, the chosen city, until the Heir of promise came.

IN SOLOMON'S FALL "WE HAVE MANY ADMONITIONS: 1. The moral danger of a life of wealth and luxury. 2. The manifold mischief and evil of polygamy. 3. The impropriety of marrying one of a different faith and religion. 4. The patronizing of other gods is a culpable leaning to idolatry. 5. Such patronage was virtually a disloyalty that made the worship of Jehovah of none effect. 6. All attempt at neutrality in religion is practical hostility to the true God. "He that is not with me is against me," etc. 7. The piety of a saintly father conferring bene-

fits on successive generations of his children. 8. Personal obedience and piety the permanent condition of the divine favor."—Terry.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

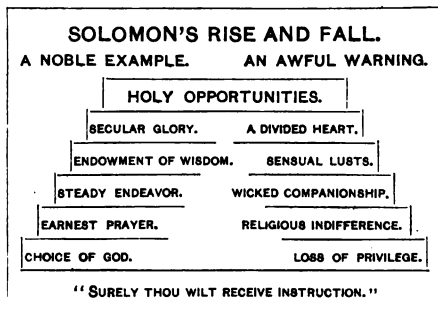
The "Golden Age of Israel" was, after all, only a gilded age. In the later years of Solomon's reign the prosperity was fictitious. The splendor concealed decay, the religion was formal and external, the liberality of opinion became license, and the throne tottered.

I. Notice the **height of privilege** from which Solomon fell. 1. It was from the height of *wisdom*. He was no ignorant, superstitious idol worshiper, but a wise man who with his eyes open walked into sin. 2. It was from the height of *privilege*. He was the inheritor of the covenant, the son of David whom God loved, and he might have enjoyed all that David possessed of God's favor. When the sons of godly parents go astray it is a sad sight. 3. It was from the height of *prosperity*. God had lavished upon Solomon riches, honor, fame, power. His return to God for all his benefits was the idol temple across the valley from the house of God. Prosperity is often more dangerous than adversity. 4. It was from the height of *revelation*; for God had twice appeared to Solomon, and had given him counsel and warning. Such is his sin who with an open Bible before his eyes sinks into wickedness.

II. Notice the **steps of Solomon's downward course**. 1. His first step was a *divided heart*. Verse 4. "Whole-hearted, true-hearted." If Solomon's heart had been perfect toward God, serving him with full devotion, there would have been no place for corrupting influences. 2. Next came *worldly companionship*. Verse 4. The foreign relations of Israel led to foreign associations; and Solomon's court was thronged with men and women who had no regard for the Israelite religion or for Israel's God. 3. Then came *sensual pleasure*. Verses 1-3. He lived too much for pomp and glory, and for the gratification of sensual appetite. Solomon fell, as Samson had fallen, through the lusts of the flesh. 4. Closely allied was *laziness in religion*. The man who lives for pleasure is apt to conclude that one Church is as good as another, and that Church is best for him which gives the largest license to pleasure and has the least restraint. 5. His lowest step was the practice of *wickedness*. We know from ancient records how utterly vile and abominable and lascivious were the rites of Baal, Ash-toreth, Molech, and the other heathen divinities of the East. From sensuality practiced in secret it is but a step to the same iniquities made public.

III. Notice the results of Solomon's

sin. 1. *God was angry*. Verse 9. God has anger, but it is a just indignation against sin. 2. *Solomon received rebuke*. Verse 11. He received in sharp words the condemnation of his crimes. 3. *Solomon lost his privilege*. Verse 11. The honor bestowed upon David was taken from Solomon, and his throne was shaken to its foundations. 4. *His people were corrupted*. The next question showed the evil effects of Solomon's influence in revolt, division, idolatry. Evil lives after its doer has died.



LESSON XI.—DECEMBER 13.

CAUTIONS AGAINST INTEMPERANCE.—PROV. 23. 15-25.

[*Read Prov. 23. 1-35.*]

GOLDEN TEXT.—For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty.—
Prov. 23. 21.

LESSON HYMN.—

Life from the dead, Almighty God, 'Tis thine alone to give;
To lift the poor inebriate up, And bid the helpless live.
Life from the dead! Quickened by thee, Be all their powers inclined
To temperance, truth, and piety, And pleasures pure, refined.
And may they by thy help abide, The tempter's power withstand;
By grace restored and purified, In Christ accepted stand.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (December 7), Cautions Against Intemperance, Prov. 23. 15-25. *Tuesday*, "Who hath sorrow?" Prov. 23. 29-35. *Wednesday*, Woe to the drunkard, Isa. 5. 11-19. *Thursday*, God's anger against sin, Isa. 5. 20-25. *Friday*, Wine a mocker, Prov. 20. 1-11. *Saturday*, Avoiding evil doers, Psalm 26. *Sunday*, Be separate, 2 Cor. 6. 11-18.

Authorized Version.

15 My son, ¹if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, ^aeven mine.

Revised Version.

15 My son, if thine heart be wise, My heart shall be glad, even mine:

¹ Vers. 24, 25; chap. 29. 2.—^a Or, even I will rejoice.

I. THE ROAD TO POVERTY. VERSES 15-21.

15. The lesson of verses 15 and 16 is one which should be profoundly considered in these days of selfish endeavor. The worldly-wise man is often thrifty merely for his own comfort, and the self-indulgent man gives the rein to his passions and appetites for his own delight. But a large share of this world's population hangs with suspense upon the careers of others. They are made prosperous and happy or plunged into mortification and chagrin by the deeds and words of those they love. Fathers, mothers, sisters, wives, lovers—a great multitude—(changing as the thermometer does with the weather) become happy or wretched according to the varying wisdom of those in whom Providence has caused them to invest their all. **My son**—These instructions are addressed in fatherly tones to all youth. See note in Lesson IV. **If thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice**—"The heart is the seat of wisdom, according to the Hebrew conception. The brain does not appear to have been thought of as the throne of the mind. Only in the Book of Daniel is the 'head' mentioned in connection with mental activity, and there it is in connection with 'visions.' In Eph. 1. 18 we find the phrase, 'the eyes of the heart.' As the heart in the body is the fountain and center of natural life, so the word was employed to designate the center of all the conscious activity of the man. Love, hatred, anguish, joy, imagination, memory, reflection, judgment, resolution, understanding, will, belief, are predicated of the human heart. 'Out of it are the issues of life' (chap. 4. 23.)"—*Terry*. **Even mine**—This is expressed in the Hebrew by the repetition of the personal pronoun of the first person, and so gives emphasis to the personal gladness of the father in view of the wise heart of the son. Literally, he says, "My heart shall be glad—even I," that is, my whole being will be filled with gladness. The wisdom extolled by the Book of Proverbs, as we have already repeatedly noted, comprehends keen practical sagacity united with high religious principle.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.	16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice, When thy lips speak right things.
17 ² Let not thine heart envy sinners; but ³ <i>be thou</i> in the fear of the LORD all the day long.	17 Let not thine heart envy sinners : But <i>be thou</i> in the fear of the LORD all the day long :
18 ⁴ For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.	18 For surely there is a ¹ reward ; And thy hope shall not be cut off.
19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and ⁵ guide thine heart in the way.	19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, And guide thine heart in the way.
² Psalm 37. 1; 73. 8; chap. 3. 21; 24. 1.— ³ Chap. 28. 14.— ⁴ Psalm 37. 37; chap. 24. 14; Luke 16. 25.— ⁵ Or, reward.— ¹ Chap. 4. 23.	¹ Or, sequel. Or, future. Heb. latter end.

16. My reins shall rejoice—With the heart the reins, or “kidneys,” are frequently mentioned in the Scriptures as the seat of desire, emotion, and passion. The psalmist’s reins instruct him in the nighttime (Psalm 7. 9). Compare also Psalm 26. 2; Jer. 11. 20; 17. 10; 20. 12. Wisdom and truth are also supposed to dwell in the “inward parts” (Psalm 51. 6; Job 38. 36). With the heart as the center of life were naturally associated all the other interior organs of the body. We note in Isa. 15. 5 that the prophet’s “heart” cries out for Moab, but in chap. 16. 11 he writes, “My bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-heres.” Compare also Jer. 4. 19; Lam. 1. 20; 2. 11. In Prov. 20. 27 we find the noticeable statement: “A lamp of Jehovah is the breath of man, searching all the chambers of the belly.” The “breath” is here evidently conceived in the sense of intelligent mind which is capable of searching. So, further, in the thirtieth verse of the same chapter we are told that stripes cleanse “the chambers of the belly.” These chambers are the inner recesses of man’s spiritual nature, for according to Psalm 51. 10; Isa. 26. 9, and Zech. 12. 1, the spirit of man is in the midst of him, as if having its throne at the natural fountain and center of his life. [Terry.] So, too, the people of Israel saw that “the wisdom of God” was “in the midst of Solomon” (1 Kings 3. 28).

Illustration 263. Inward belief and outward confession make up the complete man in Christ Jesus. When heart and lips agree to believe and speak right things, when being and doing are in harmony, we have Christian character. Paul said to the Romans: “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

Illustration 264. When there is no direct intercourse between the human mind and the divine, God is no longer our dear abode, but as some distant country reported by foreign ships, or some invisible star testified by magnifiers of the skies. Faith cannot subsist on silence any more than the body upon air.”—Martineau.

17. Let not thine heart envy sinners—This a virtuous youth is often tempted to do. The wealth of this world is not a patent-right of good men, and when one sees a companion break God’s law, and perhaps man’s law as well, and in spite of it all surpass in secular success him who has scrupulously adhered to both, one is tempted for the moment to envy sinners. But “the feeling which looks half longingly at the prosperity of evil doers is sinful.”—[Plumpre.] A safeguard against this sinful envy is to be . . . in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

18. The Revised Version applies both members of this verse to the righteous: “For surely there is reward, and thy hope shall not be cut off.” Coverdale, in his antique style, brings the same truth out with beautiful distinctness, “For the end is not yet-come, and thy patient abiding shall not be in wayne.” Dr. Clarke, Moses Stuart, and other distinguished scholars believe that this is one of the few passages in which Solomon distinctly refers to a future life, and explain the verse to mean, “As surely as there be a hereafter, the righteous man shall have his reward.”

19, 20. Be wise—Wisdom is presented as an optional course. Control all affections, sentiments, and intellectual processes for God’s honor, man’s good, and thine own prosperity.

Authorized Version.

20 *Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters ^c of flesh:

21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and ¹drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

Revised Version.

20 Be not among winebibbers; Among gluttonous eaters of flesh:

21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: And drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

* 1st. 5. 22; Matt. 24. 49; Luke 21. 34; Rom. 13. 13; Eph. 5. 18.
—c Heb. of their flesh.—¹ Chap. 19. 15.

In the way—There is such an obvious parallel between a way in which one travels and the tenor and conduct of one's manner of life that the latter is often called **the way** without any qualifying word. The context always makes an allusion clear. Compare the word as employed in Acts 9. 2; 19. 9, 23; it became the earliest name of the Christian Church. **Winebibbers**—A general term which includes not only drunkards, but tipplers and "moderate drinkers." In Solomon's day wine was the representative intoxicant. Now of the long list of malignant concoctions—whisky, rum, brandy, gin, etc.

—most are even more immediate and ruinous in their effects than wine. Besides, there are few "liquors" now which are really what they pretend to be. The wine of commerce is almost invariably adulterated; and the drinks which are partaken over bars are (as a rule, with few exceptions) made up of the rankest poisons, and have but the slightest and most distant relation to grapes or rye or sugar, or any of the supposed constituents. Such adulterations were unknown when this proverb was written; but even then the purest wine was recognized as so insidious a danger that the youthful Hebrew was warned not even to look at it. **Riotous eaters of flesh**—This in the original is a strange phrase with a doubtful meaning. In ancient Palestine animal food "did not enter into the ordinary diet of the people" (*Muenschner*), and when at an occasional banquet it was served with lavish hospitality and in inviting variety, there was great temptation to indulge in excess. The "riotous" feature of ancient feasts, in both Europe and Asia, astonishes students of history. In no department of life has the restraining influence of Christianity been more felt than at the dinner table; and this remark introduces the second meaning of "riotous eaters of flesh." It is a direct injunction to avoid companionship with those who sin through lust. *Calmet* tabulates the reasons for the wise man's directions concerning public and private entertainments: 1. The useless expense of lavish sociability; 2. The loss of time; 3. The danger from bad company; 4. The danger of contracting bad habits and being induced to lead a voluptuous and effeminate life.

21. Drunkard . . . glutton . . . drowsiness—The word "glutton" here is the same as "riotous eaters of flesh." "The three forms of evil that destroy character and reputation—liquor, lust, and laziness—are here brought together."—*Plumptre*. **Shall come to poverty**—"Shall dispossess himself." **Drowsiness**—The word occurs only here, but evidently denotes the indolent stupor into which the drunkard and glutton most naturally sink.

Illustration 265. Of three thousand persons admitted to the workhouse in Salem, Mass., the superintendent states that, in his opinion, two thousand nine hundred were brought there directly

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AN ORIENTAL LETTER WRITER.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
22 ⁸ Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.	22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, And despise not thy mother when she is old.
23 ⁹ Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.	23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

* Chap. 1. 8; 30. 17; Eph. 6. 1, 2.—* Chap. 4. 5, 7; Matt. 13. 44.

or indirectly by intemperance. The superintendent of the almshouse in New York states that the number of male adults in the house is five hundred and twelve, of which number there are not twenty that can be called sober men; that the number of females is six hundred and one, and that he doubts whether there are fifty of them that can be called sober women.

Illustration 266. *Chaplain McCabe* tells a story of a drinking man who, being in a saloon late at night, heard the wife of the saloon keeper say to her husband, "Send that fellow home; it is late." "No, never mind," replied her husband, "he is shingling our roof for us." This idea lodged in the mind of the drunkard, and he did not return to the saloon for six months. When passing the saloon keeper in the street, the latter said, "Why don't you come around to my place any more?" "Thank you for your kind hospitality," replied the former victim, "I have been shingling my own roof lately."

II. THE ROAD TO GLORY. VERSES 22-25.

22. Hearken unto thy father that begat thee—This verse clearly emphasizes the fifth commandment. But it has a broader meaning also. One's father stands typically for all restraint and education. He is a little boy's tutor and *cicerone* and priest and policeman all in one. He introduces his son into all the secular and religious relations of life; so that the first knowledge of school and jail and church and God—of intellectual culture and spiritual destiny—all comes from the fathers of a generation. We are therefore to "hearken" to them with all diligence and teachableness. We are also to hearken to all for whom they stand—to our teachers and professors; to our Sunday school teachers, class leaders, and pastors; to the wise men of all ages whose utterances come to us through books; to wisdom, by whosoever tongue she speaks. **Despise not thy mother when she is old**—No one despises his mother when she is young, simply because he is young too. The mother is to the little one the source of all supply, and it is easy to respect her then. But when the superior advantages and ripening years of the younger generation rub against the lower privileges and decaying years of the older, there is great danger of that self-reliant contempt (sometimes' good-natured and sometimes cross) which—to go no farther—characterizes so much of American domestic life. "Mother" as well as "father" may be taken also typically. Contempt for the aged is a more widespread sin than is often supposed; and it is the meanest of all sins.

Illustration 267. There are some despicable children almost ashamed to own their parents because they are poor or in a lowly station. The Dean of Canterbury, afterward Archbishop Tillotson, was visited by his father, a very plain Yorkshireman, something like those we call "Friends." He approached his son's house and inquired whether John Tillotson was at home. The servant, indignant at what he thought was insolence, drove him from the door. But the dean, who was within, hearing his father's voice, came running out, exclaiming in the presence of his astonished servants, "It is my beloved father!" and, falling down on his knees, asked for his blessing. Obedience and love to our parents is a very distinct and important command of God, upon which he has promised his blessing.

23. Buy the truth—The coin you exchange for it is your own follies. If you want the blessings of temperance, you must lay on wisdom's counter all intoxicants, and never take them up. If you want to possess truth, you must part forever with folly. **Sell it not**—Few do; but lots of people give it away—fling it on the breeze like torn scraps of paper; and go on their way saying, "You must not think me ignorant; I have had the truth myself; I know better than I act." These are the greatest fools in the world. **Instruction**—Discipline. **Understanding**—Discernment.

Authorized Version.

24 ¹⁰ The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

25 Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

Revised Version.

24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice:
And he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

25 Let thy father and thy mother be glad, And let her that bare thee rejoice.

¹⁰ Chap. 10. 1; 15. 20; ver. 15.

Illustration 268. "It is a well-worn metaphor to speak of people's character as their dress. We see in the glorious apparel of the bride the figure of the pure character with which she is dressed. The Psalms describe the dress of the righteous as consisting of robes of careful and many colored embroidery, to suggest the patience with which the slow needle has been worked through the stuff, and the manifold graces with which they are adorned."—*Maclaren*.

24, 25. These verses are much more than a repetition of verse 22. Fathers and mothers are those members of the community who have forfeited deep joy of every sort which has not its source in their offspring. The parent looks out on life through the child's eyes, and prizes wealth and pleasure, health and life even, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the son and daughter. If ever perversity dry up—or, worse still, poison—the springs of filial affection, there is nothing left for father and mother but inextinguishable sorrow. The happy young people of this world are those who have good parents; the happy older ones are those who have good children.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The opening words of our lesson are: "My son, if thine heart be wise." **A Wise Son**, therefore, is the theme; and we find the traits of such a character in these verses.

I. Godliness. Verses 17, 18. Every character has its ruling principle, the power to which it gives its highest allegiance. "Be thou in the fear of the Lord," is the counsel of the wise man. Youth more than any other period needs the restraining and guiding influence of reverence for God.

II. Temperance. Verses 19-21. If this warning against strong drink was needed in Solomon's age—when people drank pure wine—how much more is it needed now, when whisky runs riot? Let it be whispered of a young man, "He drinks," and his doom is sealed. The youth whose father rejoices in him is a total abstainer from every intoxicant.

III. Obedience. Verse 22. The family is the unit of society, and the parents are the united head of the family. Filial love will inspire filial obedience, which is another trait of the wise son, in whom his father rejoices. "What would my mother like to have me do?" is a test which will preserve a youth from many mistakes.

IV. Intelligence. Verses 23-25. The Book of Proverbs in no place inculcates a blind, ignorant, doglike fidelity. It urges upon youth knowledge, thought, intelligence. It bids the young man to "buy the truth, and sell it not." In this age of books and newspapers, of public schools and colleges, everyone can have knowledge who wills to have it.

In the youth who possesses these four traits his parents shall rejoice.

"BUY THE TRUTH, AND SELL IT NOT."

TRUE RICHES.

WISE HEART, }
RIGHT LIPS, } BRING { GOOD HABITS,
HOLY FEAR, } { DIVINE GUIDANCE,
 } { PARENTS HAPPY.

EVIL PLEASURES.

GLUTTONY, }
INTOXICATION, } BRING { POVERTY AND RAGS,
LAZINESS, } { MORAL COLLAPSE,
 } { BROKEN HEARTS.

ALL SELF-INDULGENCE IS THE ENEMY OF
TEMPERANCE AND PIETY.

LESSON XII.—DECEMBER 20.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.—MATT. 2. 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.—Luke 2. 10.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

HEROD THE GREAT.—"An Idumean usurper imposed on the nation by the Romans. He was the son of Antipater, a distinguished general, who by his own bravery and the favor of the Romans had obtained supreme power over his native Idumea, and great authority in Judea."—*Abbott*. Herod was as masterful as his father, and even more unscrupulous. At the early age of fifteen he had governed Galilee with great credit. One hundred years before this the Idumeans had been compelled by the Jews to submit to circumcision. They were now nominal worshipers of Jehovah, but remained semipagan and barbarian in spirit. Herod was even less a Jew than the average Idumean. His family was of purely heathen extraction, their ancestors having been Philistines brought to Idumea as prisoners of war. Herod the Great was *father* of the Herod (Herod Antipas) before whom Salome danced, who slew John the Baptist, desired to see a miracle worked by Jesus, and whom our Lord described as a fox; of the Herod (Herod Philip I) whose wicked wife, Herodias, deserted him to become his brother Antipas's queen; and of the Herod (Herod Philip II) who built Cæsarea Philippi, and is mentioned by Luke as Philip the tetrarch. These three were half-brothers. Herod the Great was *grandfather* of the Herod (Herod Agrippa I) who put to death James the elder, cast Peter into prison, and, being hailed by his flatterers as a god, was smitten by an angel of the Lord "because he gave not God the glory." He was *great-grandfather* of that Herod (Herod Agrippa II) who seduced his sister Bernice, and trembled when Paul preached.

LESSON STORY.—Old King Herod sat on the Jewish throne. His was a reign of gold and iron. He was a born ruler, with large ideas and magnificent methods, but tyrannical, perfidious, and morbidly suspicious. It was the close of that year which, for want of better reckoning, we count from the creation of the world as the four thousandth; it was four years before the beginning of our present era, called Anno Domini (which, as Bible students know, was begun four years too late, by the mistake of a good monk, Dionysius Exiguus, who studied in the Dark Ages, and counted his figures before the returns were all in). In Bethlehem Jesus had been born, and much of local stir had arisen because of the vision of angels to the shepherds, and because of Simeon's prophecy in the temple; albeit the news of the birth of a King "of David's line" had not come to Herod's court with any such emphasis as to cause a fresh outburst of the royal jealousy. But now months, perhaps a year, after the birth of Jesus a company of Magi (from Persia, probably) arrive in Jerusalem after a long and wearisome journey, and announce that from the stars they had read the news that the "King of the Jews" was born. In those days news that came by way of the stars was more trusted than any other, for nobody questioned the "scientific" accuracy of astrology; and the stars were almost like a crude "associated press," which sent dispatches that could be read simultaneously in all countries. That these "wise men" were astrologers, and that astrology is now proved to have been a clumsily woven tissue of falsehoods, does not in any way affect this beautiful story; for probably the star, and certainly the impression made by the star on the minds of the Magi, were miraculous. Herod saw at once that when this news got abroad the Jews would be very likely to become enthusiastic for the new King. This he trembled to anticipate, and at the same time he did not dare to directly show his hostility. So he sought to accomplish his purpose by guile; and with apparent reverence he inquired of his own "wise men" where the Christ should be born. To Bethlehem the Magi were directed, and there they saw Jesus.

MATTHEW AND LUKE.—"Matthew tells none of the details of the nativity (see Luke 2. 1-20), and makes no allusion to the fact that Joseph and Mary had previously resided in Nazareth. He brings into the foreground Joseph, while Luke tells of Mary. This difference is an evidence of truthfulness. Each chooses those facts which best accord with his purpose. The pictures were taken from different points of view."—*Schaff*.

LESSON HYMN.—

Bright and joyful is the morn, For to us a Child is born;
From the highest realms of heaven, Unto us a Son is given.
On his shoulder he shall bear Power and majesty, and wear,
On his vesture and his thigh, Names most awful, names most high.
Wonderful in counsel he, Christ, the incarnate Deity;
Sire of ages, ne'er to cease; King of kings, and Prince of peace.—*James Montgomery*.

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (December 14), The Birth of Christ, Matt. 2. 1-12. *Tuesday*, The sojourn in Egypt, Matt. 2. 13-23. *Wednesday*, The angel choir, Luke 2. 8-20. *Thursday*, Simeon's prophecy, Luke 2. 25-35. *Friday*, Filled with wisdom, Luke 2. 36-40. *Saturday*, Sent to save, 1 John 4. 7-14. *Sunday*, The incarnate God, John 1. 1-14.

Authorised Version.

1 Now when ¹Je'sus was born in Beth'le-hem of Ju-de'a in the days of Her'od the king, behold, there came wise men ²from the east to Je-ru'sa-lem,

Revised Version.

1 Now when Je'sus was born in Beth'le-hem of Ju-dæ'a in the days of Her'od the king, behold, ¹wise men from the east came

¹ Luke 2. 4, 6, 7. —² Gen. 10. 30; 25. 6; 1 Kings 4. 30.

¹ Gr. *Magi*. Compare Esther 1. 13; Dan. 2. 12.

I. THE KING SOUGHT. VERSES 1-8.

1. When Jesus was born.—This may mean that the star appeared in the East simultaneously with the time of Jesus's birth in Bethlehem; but it is more likely that the statement is simply that in general connection with our Lord's birth the star came. It probably appeared in advance of his birth, and the "wise men" may have spent months in their journey. It has been conjectured that Jesus was nearly a year old when they reached Jerusalem. **Bethlehem of Judea.**—There was a Bethlehem in northern Palestine; the one here referred to, "of Judea," was six miles south of Jerusalem; it was famous as the birthplace of David. **Herod the king.**—See BACKGROUND. **Wise men.**—Magi. Probably they belonged to the priestly class of Persians. "The term was used by Jewish and profane writers alike in both an evil and a good sense—in the former case implying the practice of magical arts; in the latter, referring to those Chaldean priest-sages whose researches, in great measure mysterious, embraced much deeper knowledge, though not untinged with superstition. It is to these latter that the Magi spoken of by Matthew must have belonged."—*Edersheim*. "Daniel himself was called 'master of the magicians'" (Dan. 4. 9; 5. 11; also 2. 48). "Whatever sort of wise men they were before, now they begin to be wise men indeed when they set themselves to inquire after Christ."—*Henry*. **From the east.**—From some one of the lands east of the Euphrates, and, with little doubt, from Persia. Their journey was at least one thousand miles in length. **To Jerusalem.**—The capital of the kingdom, and therefore the place to look for the king. With all sincerity these men seem to have gone at once to the palace, believing that "He that is born King of the Jews" would be found there.

THE WAY TO CHRIST "is sometimes impeded by obstacles. For it was, 1. A long journey. 2. A toilsome journey—difficult to leave home, to obtain provisions, and to keep the right way. 3. A dangerous journey—exposed to fatigue and robbers. If we are bent on finding Christ we shall have to encounter difficulties arising from the state of our heart, from the nature of our journey, and from the character of our foes."—*Woodhouse*.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
2. Saying, ³ Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen ⁴ his star in the east, and are come to worship him.	2 to Je-ru'sa-lem, saying, ² Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship
³ Luke 2. 11.— ⁴ Num. 24. 17; Isa. 60. 3.	² Or, Where is the King of the Jews that is born?

2. **Where is he**—"The Magi express here the feeling which the Roman historians *Tacitus* and *Suetonius* tell us, sixty or seventy years later, had been for a long time very widely diffused. Everywhere throughout the East men were looking for the advent of a great King who was to rise from among the Jews."—*Ellicott*. "So vivid was the Chinese expectation of the Messiah—'the great saint who,' as *Confucius* says, 'was to appear in the West'—so fully sensible were they not only of the place of his birth, but of the time of his coming, that about sixty years before the birth of our Saviour they sent their envoys to hail the expected Redeemer. These envoys encountered on their way the missionaries of Buddhism coming from India; the latter, announcing an incarnate God, were taken to be the disciples of the true Christ, and were presented as such to their countrymen by the deluded ambassadors. Thus was this religion in-



BETHLEHEM, SHOWING ESPECIALLY THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY.

roduced into China."—*Schlegel*. **Born King of the Jews**—"Not only newborn, but *born King*."—*Olshausen*. **We have seen**—"The East saw what probably Bethlehem might have seen. Ofttimes those who are nearest in place are farthest in affection."—*Hall*. **His star in the east**—"That is, while they were themselves in the East; it was in the western part of the heavens they saw the star. EXPLANATIONS: "1. A meteor or a comet; improbable. 2. A miraculous star appearing for their guidance, and then disappearing (seen by them only, as some think). 3. A remarkable conjunction of the heavenly bodies, namely, of the planets Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and an extraordinary star; first proposed by the devout astronomer Kepler. Jupiter and Saturn conjoined B. C. 7, or in the year 747, and seen twice, May 20 and October 27; Mars was added in the following spring. In 1604 Kepler observed a fourth star of unusual brilliancy, 'like the most beautiful and glorious torch.' It is supposed that this occurred at the birth of Christ also. Kepler's astronomical calculations on this subject have been strikingly verified at the Greenwich Observatory. Abrabanel, a Jew of the fifteenth century, speaks of the same conjunction as occurring before the birth of Moses, and found in its recurrence in his day (A. D. 1463) a sign of the speedy coming of the Messiah. Astrologers would attach more importance to such a conjunction than to the appearance of a new star; hence the phenomenon must have been noticed by the Magi. The Greek word used, however,

Authorized Version.

3 When Her^{od} the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Je-ru[']sa-lem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all ^a the chief priests and ^b scribes of the people together, ^c he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Beth[']le-hem of Ju-de[']a : for thus it is written by the prophet,

Revised Version.

3 him. And when Her^{od} the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Je-ru[']sa-lem with

4 him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be

5 born. And they said unto him, in Beth[']le-hem of Ju-dæ[']æ: for thus it is written ^a by the prophet,

^a 2 Chron. 36. 14. — ^b 2 Chron. 24. 13. — ^c Mal. 2. 7.

^a Or, *through*.

points to a single star, and Kepler's date is two years earlier (B. C. 7) than that in which Christ is generally supposed to have been born. But these difficulties are not insuperable."—*Schaff*. "We must infer that these men came to their conclusion from the rules of their art, which, though beyond all doubt futile, vain, and delusive, might yet be sometimes permitted to hit on a right result. Hence appears the wonderful wisdom of God, who used the wickedness of men to bring Joseph into Egypt, who sent the King of Babylon against the Jews by auguries and divinations (Ezek. 21. 21, 22), and in this instance directed the Magi to Christ by astrology."—*Wetstein*. **To worship him**—Not merely with the homage paid a prince, but with the devotion due to God.

Illustration 269. "Some astronomers conjecture that Alcyone is the center around which the whole sidereal system revolves. Whether that be true or not, it is undeniably certain that the star of Bethlehem is the center of this world's spiritual astronomy. If that star had never arisen on a dark and sin-cursed world, O how differently its history would read! That Christmas night brought Christ. With Christ came the gospel of human brotherhood and the elevation of woman; with Christ came the highest civilization and the purest philanthropy; with Christ came Calvary's atoning sacrifice for sin; with Christ came victory over death and the grave."—*Cuyler*.

3. When Herod—"At the time when the Magi arrived Herod, now an old man, was sinking into the last stages of disease, but was still as jealous as ever, and afraid of attempts against his throne. Its steps were wet with the blood of his best loved wife, his sons, his benefactor, and the flower of the nation, murdered to make it secure. Like Henry VIII, or Alexander the Great, or Tiberius, his character had grown darker in his later years, and now, in his old age, he sat alone in his new palace, amid splendor of architecture, lonely, hated, and hating, his subjects waiting patiently in veiled rebellion for his death."—*Geikie*. **He was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him**—"Herod, as a foreigner and a usurper, feared one who was *born* King of the Jews; the people, worn away by seditions and slaughters, feared fresh tumults and wars. There may also be a trace of the popular notion that the times of the Messiah would be ushered in by great tribulations."—*Alford*. "The Jerusalem of that day would fear a rule of justice more than all the cruelties of Herod. Strange that, while the Messiah was born not six miles off, Jerusalem gets her first news from strangers coming from perhaps a thousand miles distance. No wonder the city is excited through all its depths."—*Whedon*.

4, 5. He had gathered—He assembled the Sanhedrin, or great council of the Jews. This consisted of seventy-one members, and comprised priests, Levites, and elders. Under the term **chief priests** are contained the two first of these, and under **scribes** the third. The **scribes** were transcribers and interpreters of the Scriptures; a learned and influential class of the people. **Where Christ**—More precisely "the Christ," the expected Messiah; not here a proper name. **Should be born**—Sure that the looked-for Christ had come, Herod forms the bold purpose to thwart the divine plan and slay the newborn king, unconsciously fulfilling Psalm 2. 1-6. **They said . . . In Bethlehem**—Not all those who know where Christ is to be found, and who point others to him, will themselves seek him. **Thus it is written**—"The very body which subsequently crucified Jesus as an impostor officially testifies that his birth

Authorized Version.

6 ⁸ And thou Beth'le-hem, in the land of Ju'dah, art not the least among the princes of Ju'dah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, ⁹ that shall rule my people Is'ra-el.

7 Then Her'od, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Beth'le-hem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

⁸ Micah 5. 2; John 7. 42. — ⁹ Rev. 2. 27. — ^a Or, feed.

Revised Version.

6 And thou Beth'le-hem, land of Ju'dah, art in no wise least among the princes of Ju'dah: For out of thee shall come forth a governor, Which shall be shepherd of my people Is'ra-el.

7 Then Her'od privily called the ⁴ wise men, and learned of them carefully ⁵ what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Beth'le-hem, and said, Go and search out carefully concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship

⁴ Gr. Magi. Compare Esther 1. 13; Dan. 2. 12. — ⁵ Or, the time of the star that appeared.

in Bethlehem fulfills the prophecy uttered seven hundred years before respecting the Messiah." — *Abbott*. The prophecy is found in Micah 5. 2, and was delivered at least seven hundred years before the birth of Christ. It is quoted not precisely, but substantially, as written according to the Jewish custom.

6. "Hebrew being a dead language, so far as the people were concerned, the Holy Scriptures

were always translated into the popular dialect, the person so doing being designated methurgeman (dragoman), or interpreter." — *Edersheim*. **Princes** — In Micah the word is "thousands," which were smaller divisions of the tribes, each having its prince. **That shall rule** — "The word rule here means to rule as a shepherd does his flock, in faithfulness and tenderness. Compare John 10. 11; Isa. 40. 10, 11; 9. 7." — *Barnes*.

7. **Privily** — Secretly, lest his purpose become known and meet with defeat. **Diligently what time** — "Precisely at what time." He wished to know the precise age of the royal child whom he had resolved to slay. "So long



A MANGER IN A SYRIAN VILLAGER'S HOME.

as anyone lived who was born in Bethlehem between the earliest appearance of this 'star' and the time of the arrival of the Magi he was not safe. The subsequent conduct of Herod shows that the Magi must have told him that their earliest observation of the sidereal phenomenon had taken place two years before their arrival in Jerusalem." — *Edersheim*.

8. **The young child** — "Herod calls him the *young child*, not the *young king*; that word was too big to come out of Herod's proud mouth; he could neither bear the thing nor brook the title." — *Burkitt*. **That I may come and worship him** — This is the very depth of villainy, but wicked men often try to grace an evil purpose with a saintly face. The two most hideous forms of hypocrisy are unprincipled religious policy, and unprincipled political religiousness. The evil craft of Herod contrasts darkly with the pious simplicity of the Magi.

Authorized Version.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Ma'ry his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, ¹⁰ they ^b presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Revised Version.

9 him. And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they 11 rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And

they came into the house and saw the young child with Ma'ry his mother; and they fell down and worshiped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

¹⁰ Psalm 72, 10; Isa. 60, 6. —^b Or, offered.

II. THE KING FOUND. VERSES 9-12.

9. **Lo, the star**—It had disappeared for a time, and now was again revealed. Their journey was taken in the evening, perhaps because cooler than the daytime, perhaps because they could not wait for the morning. The search for the King of kings will brook no delay. **Which they saw**—Which they had seen. **Went before them**—Seeming to travel through the heavens.

Illustration 270. "They followed the star. They acted on all the light they had; and were 'wise men,' because they were seekers of truth. I do not know how much knowledge they had. I do know that they showed their knowledge by seeking more. I fancy it cost them something to follow that star. Explorers have to be brave men; they are almost always considered fanatics, but where should we be to-day without our explorers? There is help for us in following this 'star;' not a sun, but a star. Not following much light, but being true to the light we have. Ah, it will bring us some time to the very feet of the blessed Christ himself! Only follow the light you have. Be true to the star light, and it will bring you to the light of the sun."—*Margaret Bottome.*

10. **They rejoiced**—How different the feeling of these Gentile seekers from that of the Jews of Jerusalem! "The joy was not at the standing of the star, but at its appearing again."—*Schaff.* That which brings trouble to the evil gladdens the heart of the good.

11. **When they were come**—From Luke 2. 39 it has been inferred that soon after the birth of Jesus the holy family returned to Nazareth. If such was the case they must have come back to Bethlehem once more, perhaps with the purpose of permanent residence near the metropolis, with its opportunities for the education of the child. **Into the house**—The temporary shelter of the stable had probably by this time been exchanged for a more permanent home. **Mary**—The mother of Jesus was a maiden of Nazareth, of lowly station, though a descendant of David and betrothed to Joseph, who was of the same kingly lineage. "No stress must be laid on the omission of Joseph here. In the parallel account regarding the shepherds (in Luke 2. 16) he is mentioned. I would rather regard the omission here as indicating a simple matter of fact, and contributing to show the truthfulness of the narrative, that Joseph happened not to be present at the time."—*Alford.* **Worshiped him**—"Clearly this was no civil homage to a petty Jewish king, which these star-guided strangers came so far, and inquired so eagerly, and rejoiced with such exceeding joy, to pay; but a lofty spiritual homage. The next clause confirms this."—*Brown.* "Notice that Mary was not then an object of worship to the Magi. If she had been conceived without sin, as the Church of Rome has now decided, why should she not then have been worshiped as well as now? for she was then already the mother of the adorable King."—*Bengel.* **Treasures**—"Chests or bales in which the gifts had been carried during their journey."—*Alford.* **Gifts**—The orientals always bring gifts when they visit kings or great personages. Some have found symbolical meanings in these gifts, "as to a king, the gold; as to one who was to die, the myrrh; as to God, the frankincense."—*Origen.* "This was a most seasonable providential assistance for a

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
12 And being warned of God ¹¹ in a dream that they should not return to Her'od, they departed into their own country another way.	12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Her'od, they departed into their own country another way.
¹¹ Chap. 1. 20.	

ong and expensive journey into Egypt, a country where they were entirely strangers and were to stay for a considerable time."—*Wesley*. See Psalm 72. 15. "To him shall be given the gold of Sheba; prayer (typified by the frankincense) shall be made daily unto him." **Frankincense**—A fragrant gum, used in sacrifices. **Myrrh**—A gum obtained by cutting a thorny tree in Arabia, used for incense, as an anodyne (Mark 15. 23), and in embalming the dead (John 19. 39). "The Greek word is *smyrna*."—*Schaff*.

Illustration 271. "Bring gold to the Christ as you adore him this blessed Christmas time. Will you give gifts to each other, and none to the very one whose birthday we celebrate? But for Christ's birthday all other birthdays would be occasions for bitterest weeping instead of joyous greeting. Or, if you have not gold to bring, we all have frankincense to offer. This precious substance was the chief constituent of the incense, the ascending smoke from which so beautifully symbolized prayer as it rose before the mercy seat. Pray especially for God's work and his workers at Christmas time. And some sad and bruised heart may have the bitter but precious myrrh to offer the Christ. Gather up the little garments the baby used to wear—she wears shining robes now—and send them to the nearest deaconess' 'poor closet.' Bring out the precious keepsakes. If the coins and cast-off jewelry laid away in napkins in this country could all be brought forth for God's work, it would mean scores of souls saved through the agencies they would set in motion. Or, perhaps it is your own life you have to offer. God has hedged your way—brought you face to face with an awful sorrow. You wonder what you will do with your broken and empty life. Give it to God in special service. He will restore it, fill it, make it glow with heavenly brightness, as you minister to him in his poor and needy children, or carry the knowledge of him to those who sit in the shadow."—*Lucy Rider Meyer*.

12. Warned of God—"It seems probable that, after their homage on the evening of their arrival, they retired, possibly to the 'inn' of Bethlehem, and were then, in their sleep, warned not to return to Jerusalem the following day, but to make their way to the fords of Jordan, and so escape from the tyrant's jealous pursuit. So ends all that we know of the visit of the Magi."—*Ellicott*. "From it we learn that God will watch over those whom he loves; that he knows how to foil the purposes of the wicked, and to deliver his own out of the hands of those who would destroy them."—*Barnes*. **Their own country another way**—"They could easily go direct from Bethlehem to the Jordan River, leaving Jerusalem to the north and west."—*Abbott*.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

We suggest as a topic in teaching this lesson **Seeking the King**.

I. Observe the **spirit of a seeker**, as illustrated in the conduct of the wise men. 1. *The spirit of wisdom*. The highest wisdom is to appreciate what is best and most precious, and to seek it. Herod sought a crown; the people of Jerusalem sought riches and pleasure; the scribes sought a verbal knowledge of the law, but missed its deeper meaning. These men sought the King. They were the merchantmen seeking goodly pearls, yea, the goodliest of all pearls. Were they not wise? 2. *The spirit of faith*. Many men saw the stars, but only these men saw His Star. Theirs was the faith which in its essence is spiritual insight; for faith is that faculty by which the soul sees the things of God. To see God in the multitudinous things of the world; to hear God's voice in the din of earth's noises; to seek God amid the calls of pleasure and in the doubtings of the human heart—all this was the work of faith. 3. *The spirit of endeavor*. They journeyed more than a thousand miles over a wild country, crossing deserts, fording rivers, climbing mountains, escaping robbers. What persistent determination they must have possessed! Nor were they discouraged when, after reaching Judea, they found its people careless of their great errand. He who would find the King must endure hardness in his search. 4. *The spirit of self-sacrifice*. They left all that they might find Christ,

and when they found him they gave him of all their treasures. He that seeks Christ must be prepared to consecrate not only his gifts, but also himself.

II. Next, the **rewards of a seeker**, as found by these men. 1. *Guidance.* God led them, and he leads every sincere seeker. They were guided by a star; we have the clearer light of the word. 2. *Success.* They found the King whom they sought. Men who aim for lower rewards often fail. They who seek the highest will surely succeed. 3. *Gladness.* They rejoiced when they saw the star; they were supremely happy when they found the King. There is no happiness so unalloyed, so abundant, so enduring as that of the soul which has found Christ. 4. *Safety.* They were in many dangers through their journey, but God kept them. They were in their greatest danger at its close, but God gave them protection. That soul is safe which is busy on errands for the Great King.

THEN.
WISE MEN
FOLLOWING THE STAR.
FINDING THE SAVIOUR.

NOW.
WISE MEN
SEEKING GOD'S PARDON.
SECURING GOD'S PEACE.
"SEEK, AND YE SHALL FIND."

REVIEW OF THE FOURTH QUARTER.—DECEMBER 27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God, and keep his commandments:** for this is the whole duty of man.—Eccles. 12. 13.

LESSON HYMN.—

O Love, thy sovereign aid impart, And guard the gift thyself hast given:
My portion thou, my treasure art, My life, and happiness, and heaven.
Would aught on earth my wishes share? Though dear as life the idol be,
The idol from my breast I'd tear, Resolved to seek my all in thee.
Whate'er I fondly counted mine, To thee, my Lord, I here restore;
Gladly I all for thee resign; Give me thyself, I ask no more.—*Charles Wesley.*

HOME READINGS.—*Monday* (December 21), Solomon Anointed King, 1 Kings 1. 28-39. *Tuesday*, Solomon's Wise Choice, 1 Kings 3. 5-15. *Wednesday*, Building the Temple, 1 Kings 5. 1-12. *Thursday*, The Temple Dedicated, 1 Kings 8. 54-63. *Friday*, The Birth of Christ (Christmas), Matt. 2. 1-12. *Saturday*, God's Blessing upon Solomon, 1 Kings 9. 1-9. *Sunday*, Solomon's Sin, 1 Kings 11. 4-13.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER.

The **GOLDEN TEXT** sums up the thought of these lessons, and gives us the ruling principle of an all-round, complete character. These lessons taken together show us what is embraced in such a character. In some lessons the trait is shown by example, in others by precept, and in some by a warning against its opposite vice.

LESSON I. Solomon Anointed King. The King of Israel was formally set apart to his office, not by a coronation, but by an anointing as to a sacred priestly office. Hence this service represents **consecration to God**, which is the first step in a godly life.

LESSON II. Solomon's Wise Choice. In that hour of communion with God the young king made his **decision for life**. He did not choose pleasure nor worldly success nor conquest of enemies. He chose wisdom to govern the realm which had been intrusted to him. Like him, every young man is a king, and must make his own decision.

LESSON III. Solomon's Wealth and Wisdom. The quality for which Solomon has been famed in all ages throughout the world is **wisdom**. By this is meant not merely knowledge, but practical sagacity in the affairs of life, based upon right principles.

